



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**INDIA: ON BALANCING CHINA**

by

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June 2018

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**INDIA: ON BALANCING CHINA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis assesses whether India will be a reliable security partner for the United States in our efforts to manage the rise of China. U.S. grand strategy since World War Two has centered around maintaining and expanding a rules-based international order that globally promotes democratic governments, international institutions, human rights, and open markets. The prospect for a power transition threatens to disrupt the U.S.-led order. As China rises, the United States will depend on partners and alliances to help preserve the status quo, especially in the maritime domain. As the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest-growing economies, India could play a decisive role in determining the future balance of power.

Through depth-analysis of case studies, this thesis analyzed whether India decided to balance or bandwagon when China challenged India along its borders to include Tibet, Kashmir, and Doklam; threatened intervention during wars with Pakistan; acquired nuclear weapons; and expanded into the Indian Ocean Region. This thesis proved that, each time China presented India with a major security challenge, India has chosen to balance. The thesis concludes that, as a long-term investment, the United States should enhance its partnerships with India to balance against China's rise.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AEC	Department of Atomic Energy
BECA	Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement
CFL	Cease Fire Line
COMCASA	Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
GNP	Gross National Product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IGMDP	Integrated Guided Missile Development Program
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NPT	Nuclear Proliferation Treaty
NNWS	Non-nuclear Weapons State
NWS	Nuclear Weapons State
PLA	Peoples' Liberation Army
PLAN	Peoples' Liberation Army Navy
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
PTBT	Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
R&AW	Research and Analysis Wing
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
SNEP	Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Power transitions in international relations are viewed as dangerous time periods. Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian war provides the earliest lessons of the dangers of power transitions. Thucydides saw that "the growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made war inevitable."<sup>1</sup> Power transitions do not always result in war; however, given the frequency in which they do, it earns them a fitting nickname: "Thucydides Trap."<sup>2</sup> Currently, China is a rising power much like Athens in the Peloponnesian War, posing inherent dangers that require further analysis.

China's rise and the prospect for a power transition have evolved into the United States' most significant and competitive strategic challenge since the Cold War. After normalizing relations with the United States in 1978 and making a shift from a command economy to a market economy, China grew at an average rate of 10 percent a year, lifting over eight hundred million people out of poverty, and emerging as the second largest economy in the world by 2010.<sup>3</sup> China leveraged its economic growth to modernize its military and rapidly expand its influence across the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>4</sup> While such changes have challenged the United States to counter China's growing power, other countries, specifically India, view the power transition as its most pressing strategic concern.

China has always been India's greatest strategic challenge, and the power transition is only increasing those complexities. Since both nations achieved independence after

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides: Comprehensive Guide to The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Free Press, 1998), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Visit Harvard's "Thucydides Trap Project" at <http://www.belfercenter.org/thucydides-trap/thucydides-resources>. Also, see Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> "China Overview," The World Bank, accessed June 14, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview#1>.

<sup>4</sup> The term "Indo-Pacific" is used versus "Asia-Pacific" to describe a broader Asia region that incorporates the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. See C. Raja Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), 211–212. See Rory Medcalf, "A Term Whose Time Has Come: The Indo-Pacific," *The Diplomat*, 4 December 2012, <https://thediplomat.com/2012/12/a-term-whose-time-has-come-the-indo-pacific/>.

shedding colonial powers in the years after World War Two, China emerged stronger than India and the imbalance has continued to grow.<sup>5</sup> Initial ideas of a harmonious relationship, coined “Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai,” were crushed when the two nations clashed over border disputes.<sup>6</sup> Although China and India have avoided returning to war, the territorial issues remain unresolved and India fears that Chinese ambitions are increasing with China’s material growth.<sup>7</sup>

India’s response to the power transition remains uncertain. Seen as a “strategic triangle,” India has to factor both China and the United States into its decision-making calculus.<sup>8</sup> As the world’s largest democracy and one of the fastest growing economies, India has emerged as a natural regional partner and “strategic opportunity” for the United States.<sup>9</sup> Recent evidence, such as arms sales, military cooperation, and diplomatic agreements, suggest that the two nations have converging interests, especially in response to China’s rise.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Indian elites have historically been sensitive to formalizing defense relationships with United States, and instead prefer more ambiguous arrangements to avoid appearing as a “pawn” in an American balancing effort.<sup>11</sup> This ambiguity in elite

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<sup>5</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Mohan, 15.

<sup>7</sup> S. Paul Kapur, “India’s Relationship with the United States and China: Thinking Through the Strategic Triangle,” in *The New Great Game: China and South and Central Asia in the Era of Reform*, ed. Thomas Finger (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 55–56.

<sup>8</sup> Kapur, 55–56.

<sup>9</sup> President George W. Bush’s administration took significant steps to improve relations with India, to include waiving sanctions imposed by President Clinton because of India’s nuclear test in 1998. The administration saw India as an emerging power and was determined to be strategically opportunistic in the relationship. Furthermore, the administration thought American strategists were too often conceptually connecting India into the prism of nuclear competition with Pakistan, and not through Indian rivalry with China. See Michael J. Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia-Pacific since 1783* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2017), 485–486. See Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (January-February, 2000): 45–62.

<sup>10</sup> Druhva Jaishankar, “Uneasy Triangle: India’s Evolving Relations with the United States,” in *Realizing the Indo-Pacific: Tasks for India’s Regional Integration* (Perth, Australia: University of Western Australia, 2017), 9–11; S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, “The Transformation of U.S.–India Relations,” *Asian Survey*, vol. 47, no. 4 (August 2007): 642–656.

<sup>11</sup> S. Paul Kapur, “India’s Relationship with the United States and China: Thinking Through the Strategic Triangle,” 57–59; C. Raja Mohan, *Modi’s World: Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence* (Uttar Pradesh, India: Harper Collins, 2015), 212.

decision-making creates doubt, or at least muddies expectations, that the United States can rely on India to balance against China's rise.

International relations theory provides a useful way of characterizing India's choices in response to China's rise: balancing and bandwagoning.<sup>12</sup> If India balances, it could signal that China's efforts to become the regional hegemon in the Indo-Pacific will be contested and potentially spoiled. More importantly, it could signal that India is more likely to become a more active partner with the United States in the balancing effort against China, preserving the status quo. If India bandwagons, China's path to regional hegemony in the Indo-Pacific may accelerate, signaling to the United States that its efforts to gain India's support to balance China may be in vain. How will the Indians respond to the power transition? Will India balance or bandwagon against a rising China?

#### **A. IMPORTANCE**

The United States needs help in dealing with China's rise. U.S. grand strategy since World War Two has centered around maintaining and expanding a rules-based international order that globally promotes democratic governments, international institutions, human rights, and open markets.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the United States utilizes its maritime power to promote and maintain a regional order dominated by U.S. established institutions that ensure open and free Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC).<sup>14</sup> The free flow of commerce along these SLOCs, especially energy resources, is critical to the global

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<sup>12</sup> This thesis defines balancing as opposing the rising power, either through internal or external methods. Bandwagoning is defined as taking actions to support the rising power, which may make its efforts to change the status quo more likely to succeed. See Kenneth, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Longrove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010), 126, 167–168. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press 1990), 17–21.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Defense, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Letter from Barack Obama (Washington, DC: The White House, January 3, 2012), [http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> In the Department of Defense's *Asia Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment*, the term "architecture" is used on four occasions to describe the regional order, or security structure. The implication is that whoever is maintaining the structure is "promoting adherence to international law and standards."

economy and international security.<sup>15</sup> As China closes the gap in power and capabilities with the United States, the United States will depend on partners and alliances to maintain the balance.

China, primarily a land-based power, appears to be increasingly challenging the maritime domain status quo, specifically in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and, recently, in the Indian Ocean. Despite claiming a “peaceful rise” that would settle territorial disputes through “talks and consultation,”<sup>16</sup> China appears to be pressing its claims by dismissing international institutions and applying coercive measures in defiance of international law.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, China’s “Asia-Pacific Dream” initiative offers alternate security and economic structures for Asia, which features China as the dominant power.<sup>18</sup>

Among the challenges that the United States face in the Indo-Pacific, the implications of India’s response to China’s rise may be the most significant in determining whether the current U.S.–dominated regional order remains intact. With over a billion people and growing, the third largest economy in the world,<sup>19</sup> and a rising defense budget, India is emerging as an increasingly powerful player in the international system.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, India is geographically in the “heart of the Indian Ocean” and in perfect position to control critical SLOCs and maritime choke points that connect East Asia with the Middle East and Africa.<sup>21</sup> How India chooses to apply its power in the region could

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<sup>15</sup> Sarah A. Emerson and Vivek S. Mathur, “The Indian Ocean: Geographic Center of the Global Oil Market,” in *Deep Currents and Rising Tides: The Indian Ocean and International Security*, ed. John Garofano and Andrea J. Dew (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 3–18.

<sup>16</sup> “China’s Peaceful Development,” Information Office of the State Council People’s Republic of China, September 2011, [http://english1.china-embassy.gov.cn/official/2011-09/06/content\\_1941354.htm](http://english1.china-embassy.gov.cn/official/2011-09/06/content_1941354.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Ronald, O’Rourke, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R42748 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 2017), 25–31, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42784.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Georg Löffmann, “The Pivot Between Containment, Engagement, and Restraint: President Obama’s Conflicted Grand Strategy in Asia,” *Asian Security*, vol. 12, no. 2 (June 30, 2016): 100–102, <https://doi.org/10.14799855.2016.1190338>.

<sup>19</sup> India ranks third when measuring in terms of purchasing power parity. Noah Smith, “Who Has the World’s No. 1 Economy,” Bloomberg View, 18 October 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-10-18/who-has-the-world-s-no-1-economy-not-the-u-s>.

<sup>20</sup> Mohan, *Modi’s World: Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence*, 210–212.

<sup>21</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 56–58.

significantly influence the global balance of power, and more importantly, whether the Indo-Pacific is exposed to a coercive Chinese-led regional order.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Substantial disagreement exists in the international relations literature as to what drives states to balance or bandwagon. In the first two sections, I discuss the main schools of thought on balancing and bandwagoning. In the third section, I discuss India specific literature.

### **1. Expectations for Balancing**

Kenneth Waltz's balance of power theory suggests that states predominantly balance against the greatest power, or the one with the "largest accumulation of material resources."<sup>22</sup> Weaker parties join efforts to balance against the strongest power in the international system.<sup>23</sup> Waltz argues that all states must acknowledge the possibility that neighboring states may choose to utilize force against them, so they either protect themselves from this threat, or they "live at the mercy of it's militarily more vigorous neighbors."<sup>24</sup> Waltz also offers that internal balancing is more "reliable and precise than external balancing," and thus is the preferred method to assure one's survival in a "self-help" world.<sup>25</sup> Balance of power theory predicts that India will balance against the United States, which is more powerful than China. India, and other regional states, however, are maintaining or increasing security cooperation with the United States in efforts to offset

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Keeping the World 'Off Balance': Self Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy," in *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (2002), 121–154. Balancing can be accomplished both internally and externally. For realists, internal balancing is preferable, because in a "self-help" anarchic system, you can never fully rely on anyone else to come to your defense. External balancing is accomplished by forming alliances, regardless of whether they are formalized. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 104, 134, 167; and Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 12–13.

<sup>23</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 202.

<sup>24</sup> Waltz, 102.

<sup>25</sup> Waltz, 168–169.

Chinese power.<sup>26</sup> In addition, U.S. alliance systems in the region have remained intact since the end of the Cold War. Balance of power therefore fails to explain this state behavior and offers no clear explanation Indian future behavior.<sup>27</sup>

Improving upon balance of power theory, Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory also suggests that balancing is the predominant behavior. Balancing motivation, however, is related to threat as opposed to power.<sup>28</sup> Walt's theory determines the level of threat that a state poses by combining its aggregate power, proximate power, offensive capabilities, and aggressive intentions.<sup>29</sup> Walt suggests that when balancing is the predominant behavior, security is in abundance, because aggressive states are unable to attract alliances that enable them to accomplish its objectives.<sup>30</sup> Walt suggests that formal alliances do not fully account for expectations in external balancing. For example, the United States has remained committed to defend Israel, despite not having a formal alliance. Walt adds that security cooperation among nations is a good indicator of alliance preferences. According to Walt, bandwagoning only occurs when states are weak and isolated.<sup>31</sup> Balance of threat theory predicts that India will balance against a rising China.

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<sup>26</sup> For a review of the strengthening security ties between India and the United States, see Kathleen H. Hicks, "U.S.–India Security Cooperation: Progress and Promise for the Next Administration," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, October 2016). Japan appears to be sharing the burden of providing security in the region, which has long been an objective of the United States. See Julie Hirschfield Davis and Michael R. Gordon, "Japan and U.S. Set New Rules for Military Cooperation," *New York Times* (April 27, 2015), <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/28/world/asia/japan-and-us-set-new-rules-for-military-cooperation.html?mcubz=0>. See Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, "Testing Beijing, Japan eyes growing role in South China Sea Security," Reuters (10 March 2015), <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-southchinesea/testing-beijing-japan-eyes-growing-role-in-south-china-sea-security-idUSKBN0M62B920150311>.

<sup>27</sup> Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 12–13.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of Power," *International Security*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Spring, 1985): 4–9. Accessed June 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538540>.

<sup>29</sup> Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 17–25

<sup>30</sup> Walt, 17–26.

<sup>31</sup> Walt, 263.

## **2. Expectations for Bandwagoning**

Randall Schweller maintains that bandwagoning is far more common than balancing. Schweller argues that states' preferences are based on a "balance of interests."<sup>32</sup> Schweller claims that "the aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted."<sup>33</sup> As Schweller's article title claims, states bandwagon for profits. Schweller acknowledges that when states bandwagon with the "rising expansionist state," in this case China, it is a destabilizing condition in the international system.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, when states bandwagon with the stronger status quo state, in this case the United States, it produces a stabilizing effect in the international system.<sup>35</sup>

For Schweller, structural imperatives are not enough to force balancing behavior, and instead, "states respond (or not) to threats and opportunities in ways determined by both internal and external considerations of policy elites, who must reach consensus within an often decentralized and competitive political process."<sup>36</sup> Put simply, balancing often incurs domestic political costs that elites cannot afford to pay. Schweller's theory predicts that India is likely to bandwagon and the result will be a less stable Indo-Pacific region.

## **3. Indian-Specific Literature**

Although a review of the Indian-specific literature does not explicitly state whether India will balance or bandwagon against a rising China, it does reveal some cautionary themes on Indian strategic character. The following paragraphs summarize several important observations.

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<sup>32</sup> Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Summer, 2004): 104–107, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539149>.

<sup>33</sup> Schweller, 74.

<sup>34</sup> Schweller, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Schweller, 93.

<sup>36</sup> Randall L. Schweller, "Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 164. Walt also acknowledges that states sometimes bandwagon, but only when they are disproportionately weaker than the threat, lack allies, and when a "defensive alliance may operate too slowly to do them much good." Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 29

George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham offer a pessimistic outlook on the prospects for India's contributions to balancing against a rising China. Gilboy and Heginbotham argue that India's interests are closer aligned with Beijing than with Washington, and thus they expect to see the Indians play a disruptive role in the United States' efforts to maintain the status quo.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, they cite India's "all-azimuths" deterrence posture to reinforce India's traditional position of strategic autonomy, one that casts doubt on India's ability to partner with the United States.<sup>38</sup> Gilboy and Heginbotham's argument predicts behaviors associated with bandwagoning.

Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen Cohen provide an equally pessimistic outlook on the prospects of a more assertive India rooted in a belief that they operate in accordance with "strategic restraint."<sup>39</sup> They argue that only "hardline conservatives" inside India's foreign policy circle have desires to confront the Chinese and the larger body will abstain from trying to match Chinese investments in military capabilities.<sup>40</sup> Dasgupta and Cohen go on to argue that Indian elites maintain a distrust with the United States in matters of Indian national interests and security.<sup>41</sup> Lastly, Dasgupta and Cohen suggest that India will remain strategically restrained and commit its resources to economic development and not to defense spending, unless of course, there is a "major disruption at home or abroad."<sup>42</sup> It appears as though Dasgupta and Cohen would predict India to bandwagon.

Michael R. Auslin suggests that India's desire to remain non-aligned and strategically ambiguous have prevented it from taking a more assertive role in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>43</sup> Auslin acknowledges Indian efforts to become more regionally and

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<sup>37</sup> George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, "Double Trouble: A Realist View of Chinese and Indian Power," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3 (October 2013): 125–142.

<sup>38</sup> Gilboy and, 136.

<sup>39</sup> Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen P. Cohen, "Is India Abandoning its Strategic Restraint Doctrine?" *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 34 no. 2 (Spring 2011): 163–177.

<sup>40</sup> Dasgupta, "Is India Abandoning its Strategic Restraint Doctrine?" 163–177.

<sup>41</sup> Dasgupta, 173–174.

<sup>42</sup> Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen P. Cohen, "Is India Abandoning its Strategic Restraint Doctrine?" 173–174.

<sup>43</sup> Michael R. Auslin, *The End of the Asian Century: War, Stagnation, and the Risks to the World's Most Dynamic Region* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 133–135.



internationally engaged, such as the Look East policy. Nevertheless, Auslin argues that India is still very much “non-aligned,” uncommitted to choosing sides, and “oddly on the sidelines.”<sup>44</sup> This characterization suggests that India is likely to bandwagon.

C. Raja Mohan offers a more optimistic outlook on India as a strategic balancer. Mohan argues that Indian and American interests have converged enough to motivate both parties to develop a strategic maritime partnership aimed at balancing against China’s expansion.<sup>45</sup> Mohan suggests that India and China are rivals and have long been locked in a security dilemma.<sup>46</sup> Mohan argues that Chinese expansion into the Indian Ocean has transitioned the dilemma from land to a maritime domain, where American and Indian interests align. Mohan cautions that both Washington and New Delhi have domestic issues, because of democratic politics, that can hinder the timeliness and efficiency of the partnership.<sup>47</sup> Mohan’s suggests that India will balance against a rising China, but that this balancing will take place amid the triangular dynamics between India, China, and the United States.

### C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The international relations literature provides a range of explanations, with answers pointing in different directions when it comes to predicting India’s balancing and bandwagoning behavior: some expect India to balance, some expect India to bandwagon. Collectively, they are indeterminate when it comes to telling us what India is likely to do. By analyzing India’s past responses to China’s rise; however, we can test the competing theories and see which one can best account for unfolding events. This, in turn, can help inform U.S. foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific and lend credibility to which theory best explains India’s response.

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<sup>44</sup> Auslin, 133–135.

<sup>45</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 258.

<sup>46</sup> Mohan defines security dilemma as “each state perceives the actions, even defensive ones, of the other as threatening... a relentless escalation of tensions” ensues. Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 9. For more on the concept of the “security dilemma,” see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), 35–36.

<sup>47</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 248–258.

This thesis examines four cases that represent times when India faced significant security challenges from the Chinese and was forced to make decisions consistent with either balancing or bandwagoning. The cases are as follows:

1. The 1962 Sino-Indian War and India's Response
2. China's Threats to Intervene in Pakistan and India's Response.
3. China's 1964 Nuclear Tests and India's Response
4. China's Recent Expansion into the IOR and India's Response

Each one of these cases offers an opportunity to catalogue India's response to China when that country has faced a major security challenge. If the Indians were bandwagoning, the record will reveal evidence of appeasement and cooperation. If the Indians were balancing, the record will reveal evidence of a competitive response, including internal and external balancing measures. The empirical record can then provide insights into what is likely to happen in the future.

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Claims that suggest India will remain on the sidelines, whether non-aligned or "strategically restrained," have largely been exaggerated.<sup>48</sup> India has demonstrated a consistent willingness to assert itself militarily. For example, India's willingness to intervene militarily in the sub-continent, to include risking nuclear war with Pakistan, as well as refusing to submit to Chinese territorial pressures, demonstrates that it has routinely been militarily and diplomatically assertive.

India's strategy toward China has evolved from internal balancing focused on border disputes on the sub-continent to one of external balancing focused on protecting economic interests via maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).<sup>49</sup> China's

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<sup>48</sup> Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen P. Cohen, "Is India Ending its Strategic Restraint Doctrine," 163–177.

<sup>49</sup> See Manjeet S. Pardesi, "India's Conventional Military Strategy," in *The Oxford Handbook of India's National Security*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, Nicolas Blarel, and Manjeet S. Pardesi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018 forthcoming), 1–30.

expansion into the IOR has spurred a 400 percent increase in Indian defense spending,<sup>50</sup> and India is now a major defense partner of the United States.<sup>51</sup> The empirical evidence suggests that India has consistently balanced against China in response to reverberating tensions over unsettled territorial disputes, Chinese accumulation of power, and Chinese expansion into the IOR. In each of these cases, India has shown virtually no evidence of bandwagoning. Assuming there is continuity in Indian foreign policy and strategic thinking, India's prospects for an even tighter security partnership with the United States appear promising. India's commitment to ensuring a free and open Indo

## **E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The chapters in this thesis are organized as follows. Chapter II is an analysis of the 1962 Sino-Indian War and India's reaction to defeat. Chapter III examines India's willingness to fight Pakistan despite Chinese threats of intervention. Chapter IV looks at India's decision to test a nuclear device in 1974 and 1998 due to China's acquisition of nuclear weapons and increased international prestige. Chapter V examines India's response to China's recent expansion into the IOR. Each chapter first examines the Chinese reactions in the immediate aftermath of the conflict in question. Each chapter then turns to a description of Indian's actions. These historical chapters then conclude with an analysis of India's response, offering judgments about whether India chose to balance or bandwagon in the face of the specific provocation. Chapter VI presents conclusions of the research.

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<sup>50</sup> Jing-dong Yuan, "The Dragon and the Elephant: Chinese-Indian Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 30 no. 3 (2007): 131–144, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/216200/pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Department of State and Department of Defense, *Enhancing Defense and Security Cooperation with India*, Joint Report to Congress, Reference 1–4E73E87 (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 2017), 1–2, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=802816>.

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## II. THE 1962 SINO-INDIAN WAR AND INDIA'S RESPONSE

Chapter I introduced the question of whether India has been balancing against or bandwagoning with a rising China during four major security challenges. This chapter examines the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the events that precipitated the conflict to determine whether India chose to balance or bandwagon when China first challenged them. Leading up to the border conflict and in the immediate aftermath of partition, India's leaders struggled to govern their newly independent country; their primary security challenge had previously been against a much weaker and more vulnerable state of Pakistan.<sup>52</sup> China, on the other hand, was militarily superior, technological advanced, and more experienced than India, altogether a tougher and more dangerous adversary with which India may well have chosen to bandwagon. China had just fought the United Nations to a standstill on the Korean Peninsula where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) gained valuable combat experience in extreme weather and rugged terrain. Regardless of the mismatch, the People's Republic of China's (PRC) militarization of Tibet and behavior along disputed borders forced India to confront China as its most formidable strategic security challenge.

Had India chosen to bandwagon with China, we would have likely seen India conclude border settlements with China or even offering concessions. Additionally, we would likely have seen India appease China regarding Tibet. At a minimum, we would have seen India maintain a cooperative stance with China on its disputed borders and take necessary steps to avoid war. Conversely, had India chosen to balance against China, we would likely have seen India take a confrontational stance concerning the disputed borders. We would likely have seen an increase in troop deployments to contested areas and have seen India provide at least some support to Tibet. Additionally, we would expect to see Indians seek external support to bolster its ability to defend against China. This chapter shows that India behaved competitively and adopted an aggressive and confrontational stance against China.

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<sup>52</sup> Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19.

The first section of this chapter examines the Sino-Indian geographic and political issues that catalyzed the border conflicts. I show how China and India each shared a traditional tie with Tibet that was impacted during the colonial era. Additionally, I provide an orientation to the Sino-Indian border, describe the differing interpretations, and provide context for China's and India's respective strategic interests in the contested border areas. The second section analyzes how China moved from a superficially cooperative stance toward India to actual competition and, ultimately, confrontation. I show how India and China shared a colonial legacy and appeared to be on a path of cooperation until disputes over the border escalated. The third section examines India's response to China's challenging behavior. Despite its ideals of non-alignment, India refused to bandwagon with China. Instead of appeasing the more powerful actor, India surprisingly adopted an aggressive posture along its borders. After examining the resulting Sino-Indian war, the fourth section demonstrates India's decision to further balance against China. Following a devastating defeat, India still balanced. New Delhi responded by modernizing its military and abandoning notions of "peaceful coexistence" with China. During the war, India demonstrated the will to balance. In the aftermath of defeat, India aggressively pursued the necessary capabilities to further balance against its stronger challenger, China.

#### **A. BACKGROUND TO 1954**

India and China's border disputes emerged during the colonial era when the British created a series of ambiguous boundaries across the vast mountain ranges that separated British India from Tibet. Tibet's high-altitude, mountainous terrain had long provided a natural buffer between China and India and, thus, was of great geostrategic value to both countries (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Topographical Map of the India-China Border<sup>53</sup>

India shares a unique historic relation with Tibet dating back to the seventh century when Tibetans adopted Buddhism and incorporated elements of Indian script.<sup>54</sup> India's proximity to Tibet, especially the Lhasa region, made the two more natural trading partners compared to the more distant China.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, India's religious customs had long influenced Tibet as evidenced by Tibet's monastic system.<sup>56</sup> Economic and religious links, strengthened by ties resulting from British colonial rule, further defined India's relationship with Tibet.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Source: "China-India Border," Library of Congress, 1963, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001629012/>.

<sup>54</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 2001), 13.

<sup>55</sup> John W. Garver, *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 149–150.

<sup>56</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 149–150. Also see, Berthold Laufer, "Origin of Tibetan Writing," *Journal of American Oriental Society*, vol. 38 (1918): 34–36, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/592582>.

<sup>57</sup> Kusum Nair, "Where India, China, and Russia Meet," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 36 no. 2 (1958): 330–339.

From the PRC's perspective, Tibet had always been indisputably part of China.<sup>58</sup> China's relationship was based on the close connections formed with Tibet during the Yuan Dynasty from 1279 to 1368 and the Qing Dynasty from 1644 to 1911.<sup>59</sup> During those time periods, Tibet acknowledged a tributary relationship with China; however, the Tibetans maintained its independent mode of government and never fell under effective Chinese administrative control.<sup>60</sup> From 1911 to 1949, China weakened, in the wake of failed domestic reforms, Japanese occupation, and civil war. As a result, China was unable to maintain a significant presence in Tibet.<sup>61</sup> China's efforts to exert control over Tibet were further challenged because the Tibetans were ethnically, culturally, and linguistically different than the Chinese.<sup>62</sup>

Once China resolved its civil war in 1949, however, the PRC re-focused on securing its borders, especially in the West where they were particularly vulnerable. The occupation and control of Tibet became a strategic priority for Mao Zedong, who saw the region as "a strategic gateway leading into China's southwest, its valuable resources, and potential British or American ambitions."<sup>63</sup> By annexing Tibet in 1950, despite both Tibetan and Indian objections,<sup>64</sup> the PRC increased its territory by 25 percent, providing more space for China's booming population.<sup>65</sup> The PRC also gained access to the world's second

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<sup>58</sup> John Garver, "The Security Dilemma in Sino-Indian Relations," *India Review*, vol. 1 no. 4 (September 28, 2007): 6, <https://doi.org/1014736480208404640>.

<sup>59</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 148–151.

<sup>60</sup> Garver, 148–151.

<sup>61</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72–73.

<sup>62</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 148–151.

<sup>63</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, 72.

<sup>64</sup> John W. Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," in *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, edited by Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 91.

<sup>65</sup> Maura Moynihan, "The Strategic Importance of Occupied Tibet," *Washington Post*, August 21, 1998, A23.



largest freshwater repository, from which all but one of Asia's major rivers originate.<sup>66</sup> China was now in an advantageous position to broker border disputes with India.<sup>67</sup>

Over 2,400 miles in length, the disputed border, as it was then and is now, can be broken into three distinct areas: the western sector, central sector, and eastern sector (see Figure 2).<sup>68</sup>

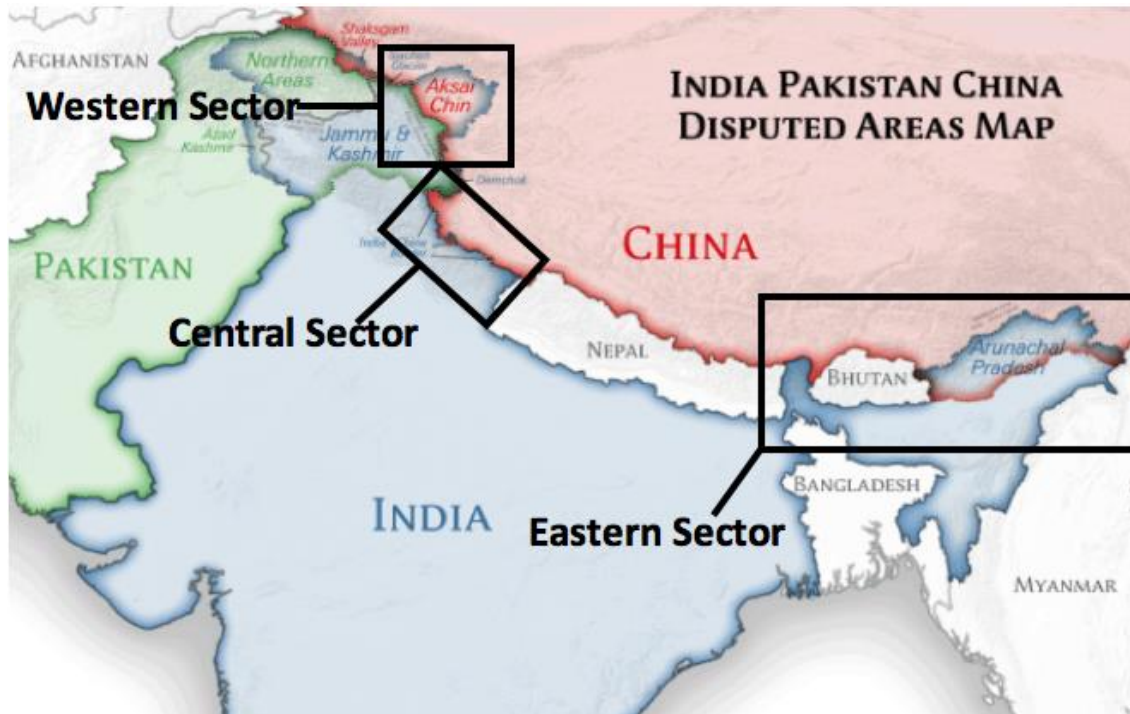


Figure 2. Sectors Along the India-China Border<sup>69</sup>

The western sector, also known as Aksai Chin, is a high-altitude plateau in the Karakoram mountain range that connects China's Xinjiang province to western Tibet; it

<sup>66</sup> Sharhad K. Soni and Reena Marwah, "Tibet as a factor impacting China studies in India," *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 12 no. 3 (October 26 2011): 292, <https://doi.org/10.14631369.2011.605543>.

<sup>67</sup> Chih H. Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 49–55.

<sup>68</sup> Lu, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Adapted from Arun Ganesh, "File:India Pakistan China Disputed Areas Map.png," *Wikimedia Commons* (23 August 2011), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India\\_Pakistan\\_China\\_Disputed\\_Areas\\_Map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_Pakistan_China_Disputed_Areas_Map.png).

also extends into the Jammu and Kashmir regions claimed by India and Pakistan (See Figure 3).<sup>70</sup> Because of the geography, China needed the western sector for initial control of Tibet, which made it a highly-disputed territory between China and India.

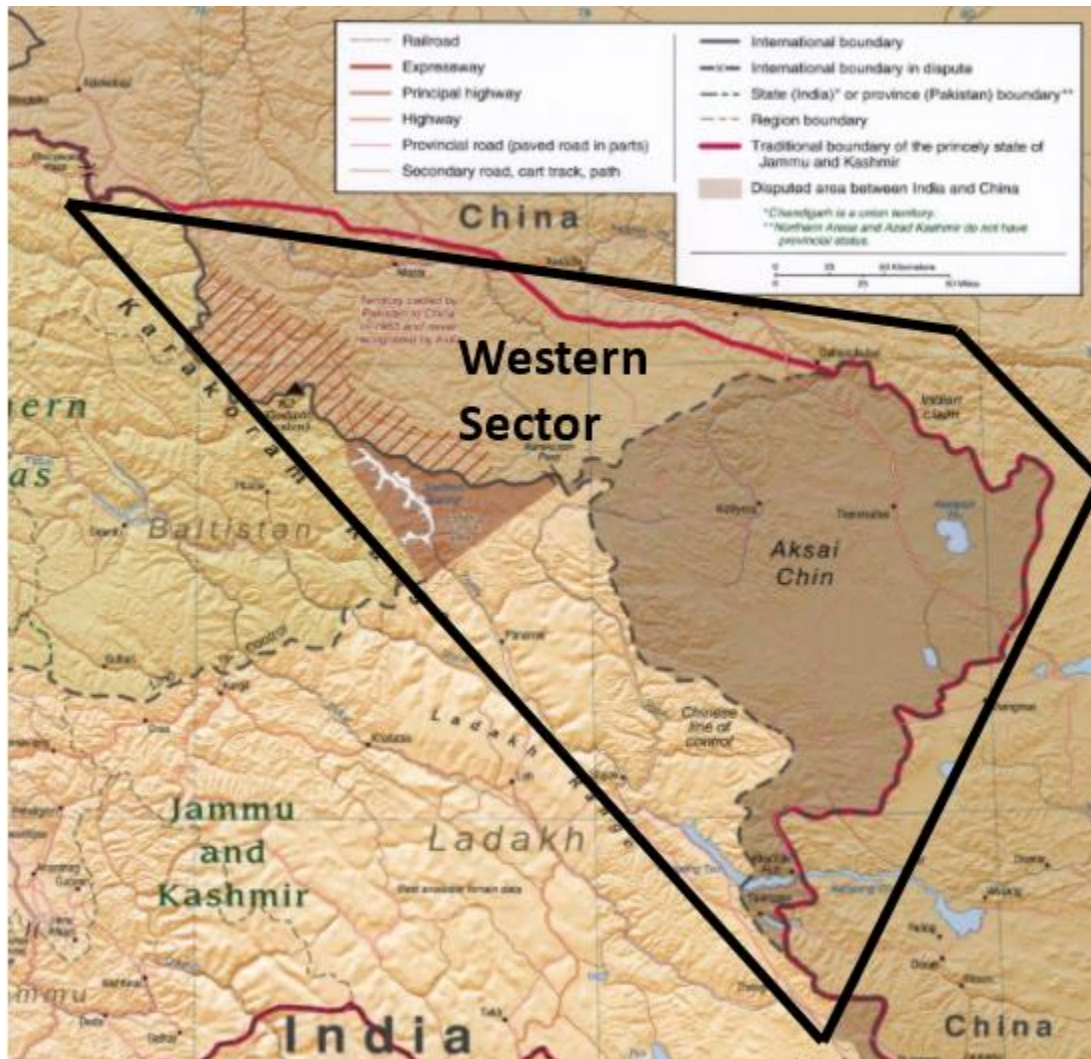


Figure 3. The Western Sector of the India-China Border<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1994), 62–73.

<sup>71</sup> Adapted from University of Texas at Austin Libraries, “Kashmir Region,” University of Texas, 1 November 2017., [https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/kashmir\\_region\\_2003.jpg](https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/kashmir_region_2003.jpg)

Ambiguous borders led to disputed claims in the western sector. Starting in 1846 and lasting until India's independence in 1947, the British produced numerous interpretations of boundary delineations in the western sector, providing India and China each with historical arguments for a claim to the territory.<sup>72</sup> Due to the multiplicity of interpretations, many of the historical British maps, including some initially adopted by the newly independent Indian government, marked the areas in the western sector as "boundary undefined."<sup>73</sup> One map, drawn by W. H. Johnson in 1865, incorporated the Aksai Chin plateau into the territory of Kashmir.<sup>74</sup> Johnson's interpretation became known as the "Johnson Line" and would serve as the foundation for India's claim to the territory in the sector. China disputed India's claim and rightly argued that the border had not been legally delimited because no treaty had ever been signed between the two nations.<sup>75</sup> By the early 1950s, the Aksai Chin plateau in the western sector emerged as strategic terrain for China because it allowed for a line of communication for the PLA between Xinxiang Province and western Tibet.<sup>76</sup> By contrast, the Aksai Chin plateau held little strategic value for India.

The central sector stretched from the northwest corner of Nepal 450km along the Himalayan mountain range toward the Jammu and Kashmir border. It featured several small areas of disputed territory totaling 2000 square kilometers (see Figure 4).<sup>77</sup> In 1954, India and China agreed on six passes along the border that would facilitate the movement of pilgrims and seasonal nomads through the area, though they failed to definitively delineate the border.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Karunakar Gupta, "Distortions in the History of Sino-Indian Frontiers," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 15, no. 30 (July 26, 1980): 1268–1269, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4368898>.

<sup>73</sup> Gupta, "Distortions in the History of Sino-Indian Frontiers," 1268–1269

<sup>74</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 68–69.

<sup>75</sup> Liu, 62–73.

<sup>76</sup> Neville Maxwell, "China and India: The Un-Negotiated Dispute," *The China Quarterly*, no. 43. (Jul-Sep, 1970): 57–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/652082>

<sup>77</sup> Hongzhou Zhang and Mingjiang Li, "Sino-Indian Border Disputes," *ISPI Analysis*, no. 181 (June 2013): 2.

<sup>78</sup> The Central intelligence Agency Geographic Intelligence Memorandum, *The China-India Border Dispute* (CIA-RR-GM-59-3, 20 Nov 1959).



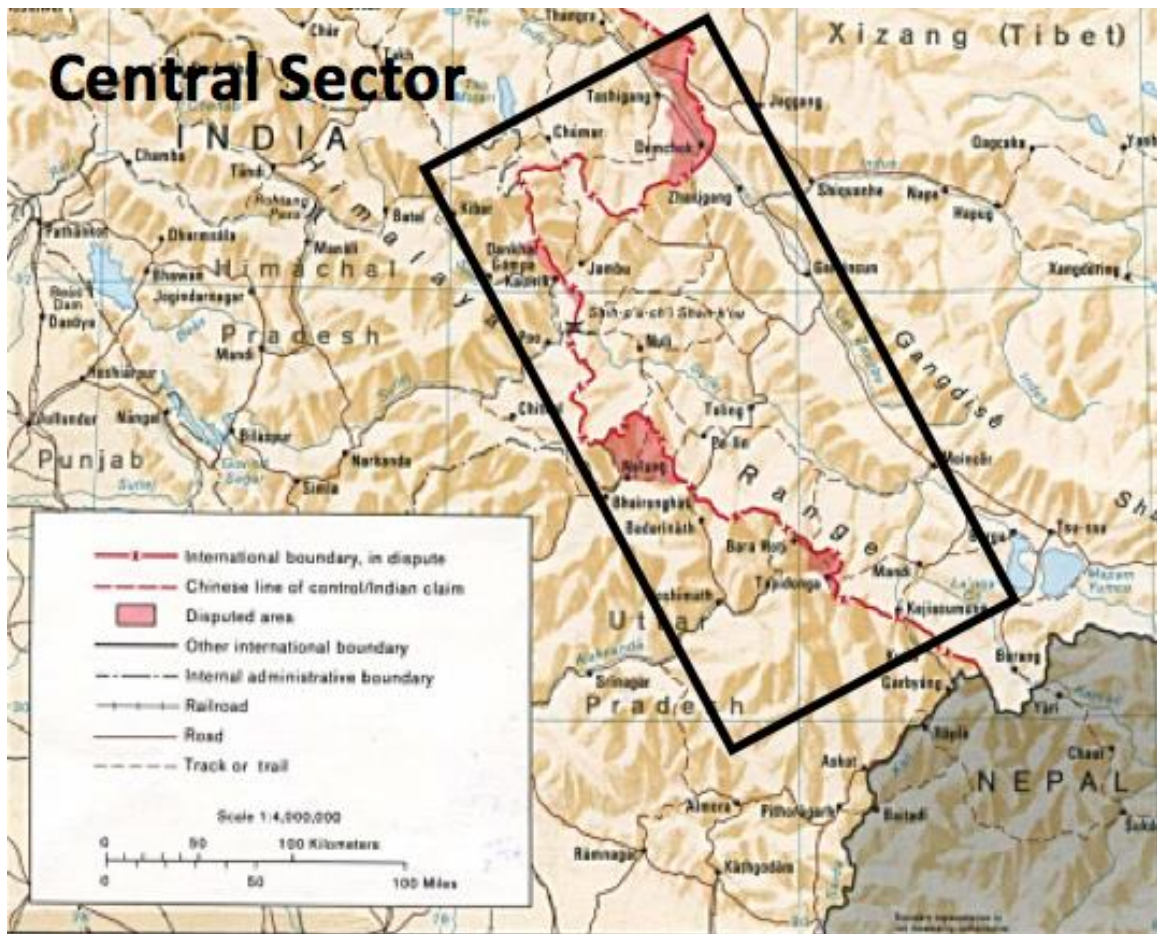


Figure 4. The Central Sector of the India-China Border<sup>79</sup>

The eastern sector was of tremendous strategic value to both China and India and, thus, became a major point of contention. China referred to the disputed area as Southern Tibet while India referred to the area as its North-Eastern states.<sup>80</sup> The disputed sector incorporated two areas on either side of Bhutan (see Figure 5).

<sup>79</sup> Adapted from Wikipedia, "India's Western Border," last updated November 15, 2005. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/56/China\\_India\\_western\\_border\\_88.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/56/China_India_western_border_88.jpg).

<sup>80</sup> Ankit Panda, "Geography's Curse: India's Vulnerable Chicken Neck," *The Diplomat* (8 Nov 2016), <https://thediplomat.com/2013/11/geography-curse-indias-vulnerable>.

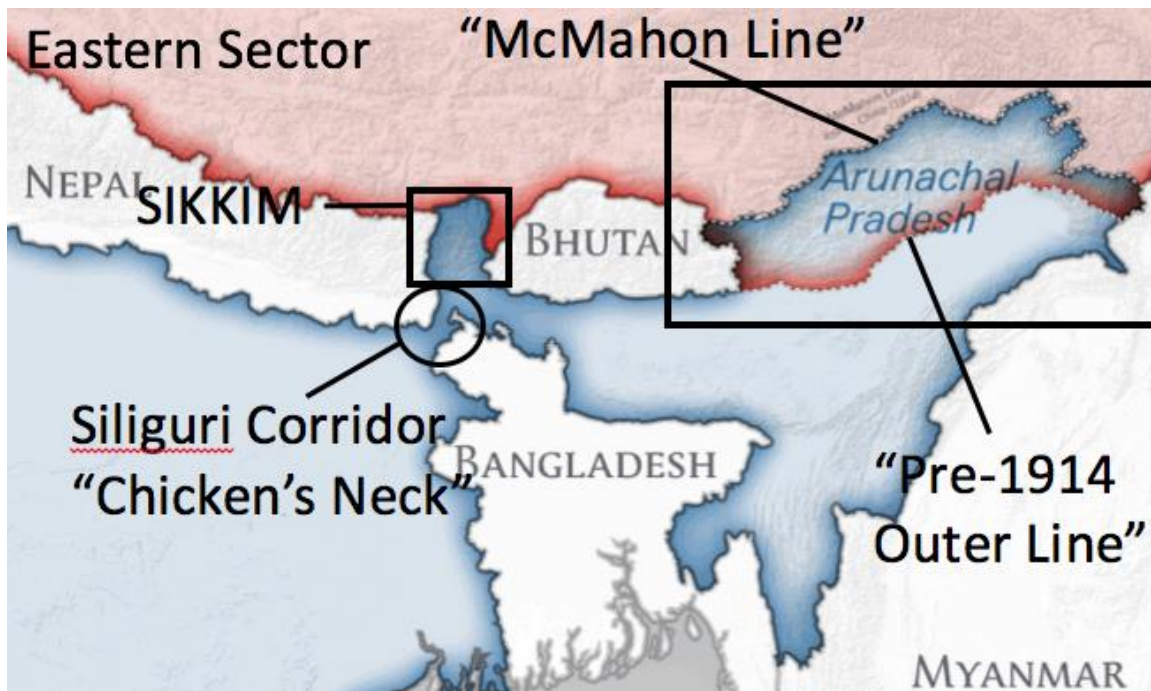


Figure 5. The Eastern Sector of the India-China Border<sup>81</sup>

To the west of Bhutan is the area of Sikkim, which the British began controlling in 1890.<sup>82</sup> The territory of Sikkim is of significant strategic importance to India as protects India's only line of communication into the North-Eastern states through the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the "chicken's neck." At its thinnest point, the chicken's neck separated East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) from Nepal by 23 kilometers.<sup>83</sup> The Chumbi Valley is in the Sikkim corridor and served as an important transportation route to move goods between India into Tibet.<sup>84</sup>

To the East of Bhutan, China and India also disputed over 90,000 square kilometers of land in what India refers to as Arunchal Pradesh, previously referred to as North-East

<sup>81</sup> Adapted from Arun Ganesh, 23 August 2011 [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India\\_Pakistan\\_China\\_Disputed\\_Areas\\_Map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_Pakistan_China_Disputed_Areas_Map.png)

<sup>82</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 22–25.

<sup>83</sup> Ankit Panda, "Geography's Curse: India's Vulnerable Chicken Neck," 1.

<sup>84</sup> John. W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 85–86.

Frontier Agency of Assam.<sup>85</sup> The disputed territory sits between two interpretations of the borders stemming from the Simla Conference of 1914 between Britain and then independent Tibet: the “Pre-1914 Outer Line” to the south and the “McMahon Line” to the north.<sup>86</sup> This area consists of a series of valleys formed along the rivers that flow from mountain peaks along the McMahon line southward toward the Indian state of Brahmaputra. India claims the “McMahon Line” marks the boundary while China claims the “Pre-1914 Outer Line” as the boundary. China challenges all agreements originating from the Simla Conference because the Chinese do not believe Tibet had the authority to sign a treaty with British imperialists.

India’s interpretation of the borders in the eastern sector became pronounced only after China invaded Tibet in 1950.<sup>87</sup> China’s annexation of Tibet surprised India. Recognizing the vulnerability of the North-Eastern states, India decided to establish Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim as Indian protectorates, claiming the northern “McMahon Line” as the official boundary.<sup>88</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s Prime Minister, first attempted to solve the boundary disputes with China through friendship and appeasement. Nehru had long envisioned a post-colonial world where nations could resolve disputes peacefully and without coercion. On an international level, Nehru promoted the concept of non-alignment, which encouraged states to avoid Cold War alliances that threatened the world with nuclear war.<sup>89</sup> He saw Sino-Indian cooperation as an important means of making that vision a reality. Twenty years prior to Indian independence, Nehru had called for close relations between India and China, saying, “India today is with China not only because she has every sympathy for her but because she feels that China’s successful fight is the most hopeful

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<sup>85</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 47–48.

<sup>86</sup> Liu, 47–48.

<sup>87</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 12–13.

<sup>88</sup> Sidhu and Yuan, 12–13.

<sup>89</sup> Garver, “Evolution of India’s China Policy,” 87–89.

sign of the future downfall of imperialism.”<sup>90</sup> After independence, India became a strong international advocate for the PRC, arguing for its acceptance into the United Nations and taking its side on integrating Taiwan into mainland China.<sup>91</sup>

By the early to mid-1950s, Nehru recognized Tibet as a potential flashpoint in the Sino-Indian relationship. He sought, however, to use this challenge as an opportunity to cultivate a partnership with the PRC and prove that coercive measures were unnecessary. Consequently, he rejected advice from Home Minister Vallabhai Patel suggesting that he take a hardline against China along the borders and on issues concerning Tibet.<sup>92</sup> Instead, he attempted to gain China’s trust, signing the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement that acknowledged China’s claim to Tibet and prescribing a set of new idealistic principles that would guide international relations in the region.<sup>93</sup> The “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” or *Panchsheel*, laid out in the preamble, included:

1. Mutual Respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefits
5. Peaceful co-existence<sup>94</sup>

Although India accepted China’s sovereignty over Tibet, the Indians failed to obtain specified agreements with the Chinese on the border disputes.<sup>95</sup> Nehru expected

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<sup>90</sup> Alka Acharya, “Prelude to the Sino-Indian War: Aspects of the Decision-making Process during 1959–1962,” *China Report*, vol. 32 no. 4 (1996): 364.

<sup>91</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 4–6.

<sup>92</sup> Liu, 90–91.

<sup>93</sup> John W. Garver, “Evolution of India’s China Policy,” in *India’s Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Sumit Ganguly (New Dehli, Oxford University Press, 2010), 86–87. Also see Garver, *China’s Quest*, 111.

<sup>94</sup> Chih H. Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 54–56.

<sup>95</sup> Garver, “Evolution of India’s China Policy,” 87.

that China would reciprocate India's goodwill by acquiescing to its territorial claims.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, he believed that China would not view India as a threat and avoid a military buildup in Tibet.<sup>97</sup> Nehru proved to be mistaken on both counts.<sup>98</sup>

Following the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement, China sought to maintain the appearance of peaceful coexistence while aggressively increasing its sovereignty over Tibet and securing its undefined borders. In the early 1950s, the Chinese had fought the United Nations to a standstill on the Korean Peninsula and faced a series of U.S. alliances on China's perimeters designed to contain communism.<sup>99</sup> China's leaders recognized that defining and securing its borders required immediate attention. In Tibet they believed, as Premier Zhou Enlai put it, that "conditions were not ripe" for the settlement of border issues and that they would need time to create military conditions favorable for doing so.<sup>100</sup> They sought, therefore, to delay negotiations with India, pretending to be unconcerned with outstanding disagreements while the PLA quietly occupied advantageous border positions.

## **B. CHINA'S CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR IN THE LEAD UP TO WAR**

One of China's primary foreign policy tasks in the mid-1950s was to resolve outstanding boundary issues with neighboring countries and ensure those countries remained nonaligned.<sup>101</sup> China desired to convince nations across Asia, especially those on its borders, to stay neutral or nonaligned with western expansionist powers.<sup>102</sup> Achieving this task would have allowed China to deal bilaterally with its neighbors. India needed no convincing as Nehru had pioneered the concepts of non-alignment. Throughout

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<sup>96</sup> Garver, 88.

<sup>97</sup> Garver, 88.

<sup>98</sup> Chih H. Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study*, 88–89.

<sup>99</sup> In 1954, Pakistan formed an alliance with the United States, including membership in CENTO and SEATO. Therefore, India's relationship with China appeared to be a natural alignment. See Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 94–95. Also see, Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, Micheal A. McDevitt, *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949* (Armonk, NY: An East Gate Book, 2003), 34–35.

<sup>100</sup> Chih H. Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study*, 94.

<sup>101</sup> Kuo-kang Shao, *Zhou Enlai and the Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1996), 218–219.

<sup>102</sup> Shao, 218.



1954, Zhou and Nehru together trumpeted the concepts of peaceful coexistence across the international community; Zhou pronounced China was “ready to work, together with India, in a common effort to overcome the difficulties, and to establish and extend an area of peace in Asia.”<sup>103</sup> For Nehru, his vision of a new “moral international order” appeared to be taking form, and, on the surface, China seemed sincere about advancing peaceful coexistence with India.<sup>104</sup> India continued to promote China internationally, which obscured China’s intentions to revisit the border disputes and militarize Tibet.

Subsequently, in the mid-1950s, while promoting peaceful coexistence, the PRC aggressively advanced its control over Tibet to increase its claims of sovereignty, challenging India’s desire for and perception of both peaceful coexistence and Tibetan autonomy. Due to Tibet’s remote location and the lack of resources available for the PLA and administrative cadre of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese required resupply networks to sustain its occupation.<sup>105</sup> As a result, the PLA began building the requisite infrastructure to accommodate and transport a significantly larger military force into Tibet, including improving what was an old “caravan route” across the Aksai Chin plateau.<sup>106</sup> The road networks were dual purpose, facilitating China’s primary mission of controlling Tibet while enabling Chinese forces to meet a threat along the disputed border.

China’s coercive diplomacy and communist reforms inspired some Tibetan people to revolt, which exacerbated tensions with India. Throughout the 1950s, the Communists’ social reforms had caused large numbers of ethnic Tibetans to flee mainland China for the Tibetan Autonomous Region due to its exemption from the reforms.<sup>107</sup> The Tibetans began demonstrating in the streets and violently protesting Chinese occupation.<sup>108</sup> The

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<sup>103</sup> Shao, 222.

<sup>104</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 108.

<sup>105</sup> Garver, 147.

<sup>106</sup> Garver, 147.

<sup>107</sup> Garver, 147–149.

<sup>108</sup> Garver, 147–149.

Communists responded by brutally suppressing the revolt<sup>109</sup> and significantly increasing the PLA's presence in Tibet, including reinforcing military positions in the western and eastern sectors.<sup>110</sup> Mao Zedong feared that India was supporting American efforts to undermine China's control in Tibet.<sup>111</sup> Tibetan rebels had found asylum in Indian cities near the eastern sector, which agitated the Chinese and fed Mao's concerns.<sup>112</sup> Chinese intelligence services discovered that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was providing support to Tibetan rebels near the eastern sector, which corroborated the PLA's claims that India was assisting the United States.<sup>113</sup> Most importantly, when the Dali Lama fled Tibet in March of 1959, Nehru greeted him with open arms.<sup>114</sup>

Mao took exception to India's positive relationship with Tibet, especially when India granted asylum to the Dali Lama; Mao abandoned the narrative of peaceful coexistence and took a harder stance against India.<sup>115</sup> Mao became determined to undertake coercive diplomacy against Nehru. In April 1959, Mao personally directed the *Xinhua News Agency* and *People's Daily* to publish articles that were highly critical of Nehru's "expansionist" policies.<sup>116</sup> In a note given to the Indian consulate in Beijing in the summer of 1959, China claimed that India's "intrusion" in the disputed territories was a "grave encroachment" on China's sovereignty and demanded an immediate withdrawal.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, Mao directed a slightly more aggressive military strategy in the disputed

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<sup>109</sup> Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle Between China, India, and Japan Will Shape Our Next Decade* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Court, 2009), 224–229.

<sup>110</sup> PK Chakravorty, "Sino-Indian War of 1962," *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 44 (2017): 287–294, <https://doi.org/10.1017/0376983617726649>.

<sup>111</sup> John Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 92

<sup>112</sup> Garver, 92

<sup>113</sup> Garver, 92

<sup>114</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 150.

<sup>115</sup> Garver, 147.

<sup>116</sup> John Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 94.

<sup>117</sup> Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, "White Paper: Notes Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements Signed Between The Governments of India and China 1954–1959" (December 7, 1959), <http://web.stanford.edu/group/tomzgroup/pmwiki/uploads/203-1959-WP-a-JZW.pdf>.

areas.<sup>118</sup> By the fall of 1959, the PLA was exchanging small arms fire with Indian border patrols operating in the disputed territory in both the western and eastern sector.<sup>119</sup> Recognizing that these small clashes could escalate to full-blown war, Mao reversed course on his escalation strategy and gave specific instructions to the PLA to show restraint.<sup>120</sup> From 1959 through the fall of 1962, China's policy along the borders consisted of sending stern warnings to Nehru to remove Indian forces from the disputed territories or risk military confrontation.<sup>121</sup>

Once it became clear that India would no longer acquiesce on the sensitive issues of Tibet and the disputed borders, Mao changed his guidance to the PLA from one of restraint on the border to a new approach that he coined "armed coexistence."<sup>122</sup> Once the Chinese were prepared militarily, they increased its coercive diplomatic efforts to resolve the disputed borders with India. The PLA's militarization of Tibet and occupation of disputed territories coupled with coercive diplomacy ran counter to the peaceful coexistence that Nehru had envisioned and presented him with a serious challenge.

### **C. INDIA'S RESPONSE TO CHINA'S CHALLENGE**

It became increasingly clear in the lead up to 1962 that China was challenging Nehru's utopian concepts of peaceful and friendly relations as well as India's strategic interests in the disputed border regions. How did India respond? Despite facing a more powerful and prepared challenger, India resisted capitulation, choosing to balance and face a war for which it was not prepared.

Nehru had failed to achieve a resolution with China regarding the outstanding border issues; however, he had substantial reason for optimism after the 1954 agreement.

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<sup>118</sup> PK Chakravorty, "Sino-Indian War of 1962," 293.

<sup>119</sup> Chakravorty, 293.

<sup>120</sup> Central Intelligence, "The Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2: 1959–1961," CIA/RSS Report (May 2007), 70–80, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/polo-08.pdf>.

<sup>121</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 177.

<sup>122</sup> Garver, 177.

For example, in 1956, China accepted the McMahon line as a boundary with Burma.<sup>123</sup> Indians had reason to believe that its dispute with China would be settled in a similar fashion. Further increasing his optimism, Nehru expected preferential treatment due to the fact that he had internationally supported the PRC for over a decade.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, Nehru repeatedly raised his concerns over the border with Zhou, who consistently downplayed the issue and made it appear as though it was not a pressing concern of the Chinese,<sup>125</sup> even as China was building up its military presence and infrastructure in the region.

India saw the first visible fracture in 1958 when Nehru discovered the existence of a PLA resupply highway in the western sector.<sup>126</sup> China published a newspaper article for domestic consumption showcasing the PLA's military build-up in Tibet.<sup>127</sup> This revelation created public outcry in India and constrained Nehru's options for resolution. Nehru had been very public in his support for China, and now it appeared the Chinese would not reciprocate Indian cooperation. In 1960, amidst mounting tensions and in order to keep India non-aligned, China appears to have offered to concede the disputed territories in the eastern sector in exchange for India accepting China's claim in the western sector.<sup>128</sup> Nehru refused to cooperate<sup>129</sup> despite his previous recognition that Aksai Chin was of little strategic significance to India. Nehru famously remarked that "it is a territory where not even a blade of grass grows, about 17,000 feet high."<sup>130</sup> Additionally, the fact that China was presenting India with a *fait accompli* in Aksai Chin diluted its diplomatic efforts and eroded Nehru's patience.

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<sup>123</sup> Parshotam Mehra, "India's Border Dispute with China: Revisiting Nehru's Approach," *International Studies* vol. 42 no. 3&4 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005): 359–360, <https://doi.org/10.10.1177/002088170504200311>.

<sup>124</sup> Mehra, 359–360.

<sup>125</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 148.

<sup>126</sup> Garver, "Evolution of India's China Policy," 88.

<sup>127</sup> Garver, 88.

<sup>128</sup> Garver, 89.

<sup>129</sup> Garver, 89.

<sup>130</sup> A.G. Noorani, "The Truth about 1962," *Frontline*, vol. 29 no. 23 (17 Nov. 2012), <http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2923/stories/20121130292300400.htm>.

Faced with China's militarization and increased domestic pressure to respond, Nehru adopted a risky military strategy to confront China along its borders. The Indian public was shocked by China's militarization of Tibet and its oppressive treatment of the Tibetan people, inciting domestic criticism of Nehru's idealistic foreign policies.<sup>131</sup> India's people had deep sympathy toward Tibet due to its religious ties, and India's media and politicians publicly condemned the PLA's actions.<sup>132</sup> In an effort to dampen public outrage, Nehru publicly welcomed Tibet's leader, the Dalai Lama, and thousands of his followers as refugees.<sup>133</sup> His risky decision increased the likelihood of conflict with China. In almost every way, India was at a significant disadvantage. In the 1950s, India was still recovering from partition, and Nehru had decided to devote public resources to domestic development, leaving the military vulnerable.<sup>134</sup> India had not developed infrastructure or lines of communication in the disputed areas the way the PLA had done in Tibet.

Despite the mismatch in military capabilities and in defiance of stern warnings from China, Nehru chose a course of action dubbed the "forward policy," which surged the Indian Army into the disputed areas in response to the rising Chinese threat.<sup>135</sup> The policy was high risk because its suitability was based on the unsubstantiated belief that China would not attack the Indians or respond in a militarily decisive manner. The field commanders responsible for carrying out the policy and Indian Army intelligence strongly criticized the policy, but they were told to silence concerns and execute orders.<sup>136</sup>

The forward policy was primarily executed in the western sector; however, India's aggressive behavior in the eastern sector was decisive in precipitating the war. Acting under direct orders from New Delhi, the Indian Army extended beyond the McMahon line

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<sup>131</sup> Garver, "Evolution of India's China Policy," 88.

<sup>132</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 149–150.

<sup>133</sup> Garver, 149–150.

<sup>134</sup> Baljit Singh, "Nehru's Idea of Indian Security," *South Asian Survey*, vol. 19 no. 2 (2012), 215–216.

<sup>135</sup> Neville Maxwell, "Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 36, no. 14/15 (April 14–20, 2001), 1189–1192.

<sup>136</sup> Maxwell, 1190. See also, Alka Acharya, "Prelude to the Sino-Indian War: Aspects of the Decision-making Process during 1959–1962," 387–391.

on the eastern edge of Bhutan and beyond the northwestern edge of Arunachal Pradesh to a location known as the Dohla Post.<sup>137</sup> In September 1962, the PLA forces occupying Thagla Ridge, the dominant military terrain that overlooked the Indian position at the Dohla post, encircled the Indian army.<sup>138</sup> In response, Nehru demanded the Indian Army retaliate and attack the Chinese on Thagla Ridge, despite being at a significant military disadvantage. On 10 October 1962, the PLA easily defeated the Indian Army's attempts to seize Thagla Ridge, and the Chinese became determined to punish India and demonstrate its superior power.<sup>139</sup> India's behavior provoked China's decision to approve offensive actions across the disputed borders.

#### **D. THE 1962 WAR**

Unfortunately, India's commitment to balancing did not mean they were prepared to fight. Exactly ten days after India's provocation at the Dohla Post, the PLA executed a well-prepared and coordinated attack in both the eastern and western sectors to punish India for its failure to submit to Chinese demands and for its aggressive forward policy. The PLA had combat-experienced soldiers who had fought in Korea, had acclimated to high altitudes from years of service in Tibet, and had proper equipment including cold weather gear.<sup>140</sup> India, by contrast, had invested neither in improving lines of communication in the frontier areas nor in preparing its troops for high-altitude, cold-weather conditions.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the PLA attacked with a numerically superior force ranging from a 5:1 to 3:1 advantage.<sup>142</sup> To make matters even worse, the Indian Army was arrayed in tactically unsound positions; in the western sector, India had only one infantry brigade spread-out across 43 posts that were not mutually supporting.<sup>143</sup> All of India's Western Command Headquarters' requests

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<sup>137</sup> Neville Maxwell, "Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction," 1192.

<sup>138</sup> Maxwell, 1192.

<sup>139</sup> Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 89.

<sup>140</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 176.

<sup>141</sup> Garver, 176.

<sup>142</sup> PK Chakravorty, "Sino-Indian War of 1962," 301–310.

<sup>143</sup> Chakravorty, 306.

for heavy reinforcements, necessary to provide a proper defense, had been denied by Nehru.<sup>144</sup>

Despite months of clear diplomatic warnings from the Chinese, the Indians had failed to adjust its military posture along the borders. It took the PLA only four days to seize the strategically important town of Tawang in the eastern sector and to score easy victories in the western sector.<sup>145</sup> China consolidated attacks in all sectors by the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, in what appeared to be a “fight-talk-fight”<sup>146</sup> strategy aimed at forcing Nehru to submit to its demands.<sup>147</sup>

Rather than submitting, Nehru and the Indian Parliament passed a national resolution to quickly counter China and remove them “from the sacred soil of India.”<sup>148</sup> By mid-November, Nehru faced a desperate situation. He quickly abandoned his non-aligned principles and asked the United States and, to their embarrassment, Britain for military assistance.<sup>149</sup> The United States responded to Nehru’s request by sending India a squadron of C-130 transport planes to assist in delivering military supplies to the reeling Indian front.<sup>150</sup> On 14 November, India launched a new round of offensive operations, which triggered a planned counterattack from China.<sup>151</sup> It took the PLA only seven more days to clear the Indians from the remaining portions of the disputed territories. In a surprise move, on 21 November, China called for a unilateral ceasefire and began an orderly withdrawal, essentially returning to India the territory the Chinese had just won.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Neville Maxwell, “Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction,” 1190.

<sup>145</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 180–181.

<sup>146</sup> Klaus H. Pringsheim, “China, India, and Their Himalayan Border (1961-1963),” *Asian Survey*, vol. 3, no. 10. (October 1963): 490.

<sup>147</sup> Garver, “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” 121–122.

<sup>148</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 114.

<sup>149</sup> David Binder, “U.S. Gears Policy to Peril Of a Full China-India War,” *New York Times* (November 23, 1962), <https://www.nytimes.com/1962/11/23/archives/us-gears-policy-to-peril-of-a-full-china-india-war-new-fighting-fear.html>.

<sup>150</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 40–41.

<sup>151</sup> Garver, “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” 122–123.

<sup>152</sup> Klaus H. Pringsheim, “China, India, and Their Himalayan Border (1961-1963),” 490.

Outside of heroic actions at the small unit level, India's military response to China's offensive was uncoordinated and operationally incompetent. India had failed to commit its superior airpower to the fight.<sup>153</sup> Despite the support from outside entities, India was unable to halt the Chinese offensive. In just one month of fighting, Indian losses totaled 1383 killed, 1047 wounded, 1696 missing, and close to 4000 captured.<sup>154</sup>

Indians, devastated by China's decision to punish them, found the Sino-Indian relationship fundamentally altered from one of idealistic cooperation to realistic competition. India abandoned its forward policy and accepted the necessity of change in its defense strategy. Nehru recognized that his concept of peaceful coexistence would have to be replaced by a more realistic defense strategy. Although the Indians had suffered losses, India had demonstrated a stubborn defiance toward a more powerful and prepared China.

#### **E. INDIA'S RESPONSE TO DEFEAT**

Indians had two choices after its defeat: they could submit to China's demands and bandwagon or they could reposition themselves to balance. If they had chosen to bandwagon, we would have expected to see the Indians settle the border dispute with China and subsequently decreased their military presence along the border. Additionally, we would have expected to see diplomatic efforts from the Indians to the Chinese signaling a desire to decrease tensions. Instead, the Indians chose to behave more competitively against China through a mixture of internal and external balancing. Although China handed India an embarrassing loss, the Chinese failed to change the status quo on the border dispute; therefore, the same challenge along the borders remained.

Hope for peaceful coexistence with China as well as non-alignment vanished in the winter of 1962. The war served as a wakeup call for India to pursue a more realistic defense strategy. India now viewed China as a powerful threat to national security. India's defeat also highlighted significant shortfalls in Indian civil-military relations. Prior to the 1962

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<sup>153</sup> PK Chakravorty, "Sino-Indian War of 1962," 301–310.

<sup>154</sup> Chakravorty, 310.



war, Nehru had cashiered the military leaders who disagreed with his ideological views on defense and replaced them with unproven military leaders who would follow his policies.<sup>155</sup> In the aftermath of the 1962 war, Nehru and his hand selected military officers lost credibility and subsequently their hold on power.

China's willingness to use their military power for coercive means motivated India to make profound changes to its defense posture.<sup>156</sup> In the wake of defeat, India made a rapid change in policy toward Tibet, joining efforts with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to form a cooperative partnership to support Tibetan liberation efforts.<sup>157</sup> India created the Special Frontier Force, akin to U.S. Green Berets, to support Tibetan separatist groups.<sup>158</sup> At a minimum, India created an immediate asymmetric threat for China to contend with on its eastern borders. India increased diplomatic agitation against China by supporting the Republic of China, or Taiwan, in its independence efforts.<sup>159</sup> From a conventional standpoint, India doubled defense spending from 2.1 per cent of gross national product in 1962 to 4.5 percent by 1964.<sup>160</sup> In addition to increasing the overall size of the army, India raised ten mountain divisions trained and equipped to operate in the high-altitude environment along the Sino-Indian border.<sup>161</sup>

After a decade of championing non-alignment, India looked outward for security partnerships to help balance against the Chinese threat.<sup>162</sup> At first, the United States provided India with much needed military assistance aimed at bolstering defenses against

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<sup>155</sup> Neville Maxwell, "Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction," 1190–1191.

<sup>156</sup> Parshotam Mehra, "India's Border Dispute with China: Revisiting Nehru's Approach," 359–360.

<sup>157</sup> John Garver, "India, China, The United States, Tibet, and the Origins of the 1962 War," *India Review*, vol. 3 no. 2 (April 2004): 13–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480490465054>.

<sup>158</sup> Iskander Rehman, "A Himaylayan Challenge: India's Conventional Deterrent and the Role of Special Operations Forces along the Sino-Indian Border," *Naval War College Review*, vol. 70 no. 1 (Winter 2017): 118.

<sup>159</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 114–115.

<sup>160</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 37.

<sup>161</sup> Ganguly, 37.

<sup>162</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 181–182.

a future war with China.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, the United States attached their assistance packages with requests for Indian support in the Vietnam War, and, when India objected, it damaged the relationship.<sup>164</sup> Simultaneously, the Soviet Union's relationship with China worsened, which created a convergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union. In the years after the Sino-Indian war, India demonstrated the willingness to partner with whichever superpower provided the best package for balancing against China.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

India's lessons from the 1962 Sino-Indian War informed their new foreign policy of balancing China's rise. India addressed material and strategic shortfalls, which positioned them to deal with China on a more even playing field. Having recognized that India could no longer be dismissed as a peaceful, ill-prepared, and supportive bystander, China improved relations with Pakistan, thereby exacerbating an already sensitive and dynamic challenge for India. In the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War, armed with China's support, Pakistan went to war with India to resolve disputes over their borders.

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<sup>163</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 106–107.

<sup>164</sup> Liu, 106–107.

### **III. CHINA'S USE OF PAKISTAN TO CHALLENGE INDIA'S COMMITMENT TO BALANCE**

In Chapter II, I demonstrated that the Sino-Indian relationship remained relatively cooperative until the late 1950s and early 1960s when border disputes led to war. I showed how India's refusal to appease China on its disputed borders demonstrated a will to balance against China despite being significantly weaker and lacking sufficient preparation for conflict. In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian war, India initiated a series of both internal and external balancing efforts to protect against future conflict with China. China leveraged Pakistan's conflicts with India to bleed Indian resources and make it more challenging for the Indians to effectively balance. This chapter examines how China then further tested India's commitment to balancing by exploiting India's geopolitical vulnerabilities, essentially continuing a different kind of border dispute.

Had India chosen to bandwagon with China after the 1962 Sino-Indian war, we would likely have seen India avoid, or severely limit, military confrontation with Pakistan and perhaps allow China to arbitrate a resolution between the two conflicting states over its disputed territory in Kashmir. Even if India chose to fight Pakistan against China's warnings, if India was bandwagoning, we would likely have seen India establish diplomatic lines of communication with China and possibly seek consultation regarding conflict resolution with Pakistan. India may have even made concessions to both Pakistan and China to avoid increasing military spending and troop deployments across its expansive land border instead of fighting two costly wars. Had India chosen to bandwagon, China would likely have extended its sphere of influence in South Asia.

On the other hand, had India chosen to balance against China, we would likely have seen India seek external support from the international community to improve its ability to defend against China. We would have seen India continue to modernize its military and deploy into contested areas where China had threatened interference in South Asia. Furthermore, we would have seen India defy China's overall attempts to interfere in the affairs on the Indian sub-continent. Had India chosen to balance, not only would India have

prevented China's sphere of influence from growing, we would have seen India protect and possibly expand its own sphere of influence.

This chapter demonstrates that India continued to exhibit behaviors consistent with balancing against China, fighting two wars against Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, defying Chinese threats of intervention, and seeking security guarantees from China's rivals. The first section provides context for why China to formed a closer security partnership with Pakistan, essentially because of dynamics stemming from the Cold War and due to sharing a common adversary, India. The section also explains how the Indo-Pakistani relationship was ripe with geopolitical vulnerabilities stemming from partition in 1947, which created an opportunity for China to exploit the situation by supporting Pakistan, worsening India's security challenges. The second section examines China's role in the peaceful-Pakistani War of 1965 and India's response. In this case, India preserved the status quo in Kashmir despite China's threat to intervene. The third section examines the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war where India again decided to fight the Pakistanis despite threats of Chinese intervention. India's decisive victory, coupled with China's failure to intervene on behalf of Pakistan, showed India as a far more competent military and political power than had been the case a decade earlier during its defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian war. India's internal and external balancing efforts had proved effective. Ultimately, as the fourth and last section concludes, India emerged as an unquestioned military power in South Asia and a greater strategic competitor to China.

#### **A. BACKGROUND TO 1965**

China exploited India's geopolitical vulnerabilities by significantly increasing relations with Pakistan after the 1962 Sino-Indian War. In the immediate aftermath of the 1962 war, Mao was optimistic that India would abandon its aggressive stance along the borders and seek a peaceful and cooperative relationship with China.<sup>165</sup> However, as Chapter II showed, China failed to coerce India to bandwagon after punishing them in the 1962 war and, therefore, had to acknowledge the possibility of future conflict with a more

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<sup>165</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 192.

prepared India. India's military modernization and buildup after its 1962 defeat, in addition to its refusal to return to peaceful coexistence, meant that China now had to account for intentional Indian balancing efforts.<sup>166</sup> China went from maintaining friendly relations, if not a partnership, with a non-aligned India that saw the world as cooperative, to challenging an India that viewed the Chinese as its primary strategic competitor. Therefore, China leveraged Pakistan to help protect against existing and future conflicts with India.<sup>167</sup>

The dynamics of the Cold War also served as a catalyst for increased Sino-Pakistani relations. The 1962 Sino-Indian war had accelerated the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relationship and catalyzed increased U.S.-Indian relations, both of which exacerbated China's desires to increase relations with Pakistan.<sup>168</sup> The Sino-Soviet relationship deteriorated in the early 1960s, and the two countries began to confront each other over their own disputed territories culminating in war by 1969.<sup>169</sup> As the Soviet Union steadily drifted closer to India, China responded by increasing relations with Pakistan.<sup>170</sup> Western support for India, mostly from the United States and Britain, in the form of military assistance, caused Pakistan to publicly voice frustrations with the arrangements and pushed them toward a tighter relationship with China.<sup>171</sup> Pakistan's primary concern was that Western military assistance provided to India would be used against Pakistan.<sup>172</sup> Simultaneously, one of China's foreign policy foci was to remove or to mitigate Western military influence around its periphery.<sup>173</sup> With India and U.S. ties increasing, China determined that Pakistan could help preoccupy a Soviet- and Western-backed India.<sup>174</sup> Put

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<sup>166</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 192.

<sup>167</sup> Garver, 192.

<sup>168</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, 109–111.

<sup>169</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 183–185.

<sup>170</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 18–19.

<sup>171</sup> W.M. Dobell, "Ramifications of the China-Pakistan Border Treaty," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Autumn 1964), 286–288. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2754976>.

<sup>172</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "Deterrence Failure Revisited: The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 13 no. 4 (January 24, 2008): 84–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402399008437432>.

<sup>173</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 192.

<sup>174</sup> Garver, 193.

simply, China recognized that any military assistance provided to Pakistan, even from the United States,<sup>175</sup> would likely be turned on India, which conveniently served China's interests.<sup>176</sup>

The Indo-Pakistani relationship was already extremely vulnerable due to complications resulting from partition along religious lines in 1947; India and Pakistan's founding narratives were diametrically opposed. Pakistan's narrative stemmed from the "two nation theory" where Muslims on the Indian sub-continent required its own state separate from India's Hindu majority.<sup>177</sup> Contrarily, India maintained the narrative that a diverse group of ethnicities could live under a secular democratic government.<sup>178</sup> Pakistan was divided into two areas separated by over a thousand miles: West Pakistan in the Punjabi-dominated area and East Pakistan in the Bengali-dominated area.

Due to its conflicting narratives, India and Pakistan grappled over the control of the Muslim-dominated areas of Jammu and Kashmir, a conflict that continues today. In 1947–48, Pakistan secured over a third of Kashmir during the first Indo-Pakistani war.<sup>179</sup> As a part of the ceasefire agreement, a Cease-Fire Line (CFL) was drawn that separated Pakistan- and India-controlled portions of Kashmir.<sup>180</sup> Despite the acquisition of territory, Pakistan and India remained deadlocked on resolving the territorial dispute.<sup>181</sup> Pakistan perceived liberating Kashmir from Indian control as necessary because it provided crucial support for the two-nation theory. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's former foreign minister and president, recorded his belief that if "Pakistan were to abandon the struggle, and a bad

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<sup>175</sup> Garver, 194.

<sup>176</sup> Garver, 192–195.

<sup>177</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 3–4.

<sup>178</sup> Ganguly, 3–5

<sup>179</sup> Ashok Kapur, "Major Powers and the Persistence of the India-Pakistan conflict," in *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry*, edited by T.V. Paul (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 142.

<sup>180</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "Deterrence failure revisited: The Indo-Pakistani war of 1965," 84.

<sup>181</sup> Rajesh M. Basrur, "India-Pakistan Relations: Between War and Peace" in *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Sumit Ganguly (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2010), 86–87.

compromise would be tantamount to abandonment [, it] might[,] in turn, lead to the collapse of Pakistan.”<sup>182</sup>

China recognized that the Indo-Pakistani divide over the highly symbolic and strategically sensitive territory of Kashmir provided opportunity to exploit Indian geopolitical vulnerabilities. In March 1963, Pakistan agreed to hand over 5,300 square kilometers of Pakistani-administered Kashmir to China<sup>183</sup> in exchange for receiving 1,942 square kilometers of Chinese-controlled terrain.<sup>184</sup> The deal enabled China to further improve its infrastructure projects in the disputed western sector connecting Xinjiang province with Tibet.<sup>185</sup> The land exchange demonstrated Pakistan’s commitment toward cooperation with China in direct opposition to India on disputed territory. Additionally, China used the border deal with Pakistan to bolster its reputation as a peaceful country capable of settling border disputes.<sup>186</sup> The timing of the deal also marked the period when Pakistan and China began to consider each other “all weather” friends.<sup>187</sup>

Pakistan was already considering going to war with India over Kashmir, but China’s promises of support encouraged Pakistan toward actual conflict. Pakistan recognized that India had implemented internal and external balancing strategies after its defeat in 1962 which began to tilt the military balance of capabilities in favor of India; therefore, the Pakistanis perceived a closing “window of opportunity” for military action regarding Kashmir.<sup>188</sup> India had increased its defense budget from 2.1 percent of gross national product (GNP) in 1962 to 4.5 percent in 1964–65.<sup>189</sup> The uptick in defense spending enabled India to increase troop levels to 870,000 spread among sixteen divisions

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<sup>182</sup> Sumit Ganguly, “Deterrence Failure Revisited: The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965,” 86.

<sup>183</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 32–33.

<sup>184</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 10–11.

<sup>185</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 33.

<sup>186</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, “India as a Factor in Sino-Pakistani Relations,” *International Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, August 1967–68, 289.

<sup>187</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics*, 22–23.

<sup>188</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 31.

<sup>189</sup> Ganguly, 37.

and also expand its armor capabilities and air force.<sup>190</sup> India's modernization efforts created insecurity amongst Pakistani strategists who looked to China for assistance with addressing India's growing power. In July 1963, Pakistan's foreign minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, publicly claimed that "if India were in her frustration to turn her guns against Pakistan the international situation is such today that Pakistan would not be alone in that conflict."<sup>191</sup> In this address, Bhutto strongly hinted that Pakistan had received a security guarantee from China to address the threat of a modernizing India. Witnessing India fumble its response during the Sino-Indian war, and believing that it had the support of China, led Pakistan to believe that aggressive military and diplomatic pressures in Kashmir would likely yield positive results.<sup>192</sup>

With an existent belief in its own superiority, Pakistan, after Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964, perceived an opportunity to take advantage of what they thought would be a fractured India.<sup>193</sup> Pakistan was encouraged to fight based on its belief that Pakistanis were superior fighters than the Indians and that India "lacked the stomach for real battle."<sup>194</sup> This belief arose out of the colonial era when the British had constructed myths that certain ethnic groups were superior fighters, thus named the "martial races."<sup>195</sup> In the early and mid-1960s, Pakistani leaders incorporated these perceived cultural and racial advantages into its decision-making calculus.<sup>196</sup>

More importantly, the Pakistanis believed the threat of Chinese intervention on its behalf would prevent a conventional military response from India and would significantly increase Pakistan's chances for victory. Pakistani leaders had increasingly grown more confident that China would intervene on its behalf and that India would not risk a two-front

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<sup>190</sup> Ganguly, 37.

<sup>191</sup> W. M. Dobell, "Ramifications of the China-Pakistan Border Treaty," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 3 (Autumn, 1964): 291, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2754976>.

<sup>192</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 192.

<sup>193</sup> Sumit, "Deterrence failure revisited: The Indo-Pakistani war of 1965," 89.

<sup>194</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 37

<sup>195</sup> Ganguly, "Deterrence failure revisited: The Indo-Pakistani war of 1965," 88.

<sup>196</sup> Ganguly, 88.



war. Privately, the Chinese assured Pakistan of its support. In March 1965, Zhou Enlai expressed to Pakistani President Ayub Khan that “if India commits aggression into Pakistan territory, China would definitely support Pakistan.”<sup>197</sup>

In early 1965, the Pakistani leadership began to seriously consider a risky plan. Codenamed Operation Gibraltar, the plan was to infiltrate militants labeled as “Kashmiri freedom fighters,” into Kashmir to set conditions for conventional military actions, codenamed Operation Grand Slam, to repel the Indian established authorities and officially annex Kashmir.<sup>198</sup> Throughout the development of Operation Gibraltar, China and Pakistan held frequent ministerial level talks where the Chinese directly consulted on Pakistani plans.<sup>199</sup> One key aspect of the plan was Pakistan’s assumption that the threat of Chinese intervention would prevent India from launching a conventional response.<sup>200</sup> For over a year, high-level Pakistani strategists conducted intelligence assessments on Kashmir and further concluded that the timing was right to attempt a seizure of Kashmir.<sup>201</sup> Although China’s public statements and diplomatic signaling suggested a will to intervene in the case of Indian aggression, China’s involvement and planning for Pakistan’s offensive operation indicated the will to intervene regardless of which side cast the first strike.

## **B. CHINA’S CHALLENGE AND INDIA’S RESPONSE—1965 INDO-PAKISTANI WAR**

Throughout the conflict, both Pakistani and Chinese officials signaled to India that China was prepared to intervene militarily on behalf of Pakistan.<sup>202</sup> In 1965, believing they had China’s support, Pakistan went to war with India. Operation Gibraltar commenced in late May 1965 when Pakistani-led forces mustered and organized into units in Muree,

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<sup>197</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 194.

<sup>198</sup> Garver, 194–196.

<sup>199</sup> Garver, 194–196.

<sup>200</sup> Garver, 194–196

<sup>201</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 52–57.

<sup>202</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics*, 17–19.

Pakistan, in preparation for its attack on Indian controlled Kashmir.<sup>203</sup> The forces began their infiltration across the CFL into Kashmir in late July with the intent to blend into groups of Kashmiris that were publicly celebrating religious ceremonies and protesting the arrest of key Kashmiri-Muslim power broker, Sheik Abdullah, and then to lead the masses in an uprising against Indian authorities.<sup>204</sup>

Although 7500 Gibraltar forces successfully infiltrated Kashmir in the first several weeks of August, their efforts to incite an uprising with the Kashmiri population utterly failed.<sup>205</sup> The Kashmiri people rejected the Pakistani force's calls for rebellion and, instead, reported their activities to the Indian authorities.<sup>206</sup> By 15 August, India responded with military operations across the CFL into Pakistani territory,<sup>207</sup> ultimately securing the border crossing points and preventing over 5000 remaining Gibraltar forces from infiltrating into Kashmir.<sup>208</sup> By the end of August, Pakistan recognized that Operation Gibraltar's objectives were compromised and that they needed Operation Grand Slam forces to reinforce defensive efforts in Kashmir.<sup>209</sup> After a series of escalations by both the Indian Army and Pakistani Army, the conflict came to a stalemate by mid-September with the status quo having remained the same.<sup>210</sup>

India then defied China's threats of intervention. In May 1965, during the earliest stages of Operation Gibraltar, Pakistan's foreign secretary relayed to the United States that China would attack India should the Indians launch military operations in East Pakistan during a conflict over Kashmir.<sup>211</sup> Only days after the commencement of the war, China's

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<sup>203</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 43.

<sup>204</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 56.

<sup>205</sup> Kapur, 56.

<sup>206</sup> Kapur, 56.

<sup>207</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 44.

<sup>208</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 56

<sup>209</sup> Kapur, 56.

<sup>210</sup> Kapur, 56.

<sup>211</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 196.

foreign minister flew to Karachi to confirm Beijing's commitment to support Pakistan's war efforts.<sup>212</sup> Once the war escalated to conventional conflict, China sent a series of messages to India demanding they halt their attacks or face potential intervention.<sup>213</sup> On 9 September, Zhou Enlai, China's Premier, threatened India by stating that "the Indian government must bear full responsibility for all the consequences arising from its extended aggression."<sup>214</sup> India responded by launching a mechanized assault on two of Pakistan's cities, Lahore and Sialkot, in what would be described as the "biggest tank battles since WWII."<sup>215</sup> By 17 September, China gave India an ultimatum to cease hostilities<sup>216</sup> within three days of receipt of message or face "grave consequences."<sup>217</sup> Furthermore, China mobilized troops on the China-Sikkim border to reinforce its threats of military intervention.<sup>218</sup> India acknowledged China's threats to intervene and dismissed them, refusing to back down.

India demonstrated a more competent preparation for war with China than what was displayed in the 1962 loss. For example, starting in 1963, India developed an Indian-led division of highly trained ethnic Tibetan commandos to fight in conjunction with Indian conventional forces in Tibet in case that China opened a second front during conflict with Pakistan.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, India deployed six of its sixteen divisions to the Sino-Indian border.<sup>220</sup> These examples clearly illustrate how India's improved internal balancing capabilities gave its leaders the confidence to stand up to China's challenging threats to intervene militarily on Pakistan's behalf during the 1965 conflict.

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<sup>212</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, 17–18.

<sup>213</sup> Small, 17–19.

<sup>214</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 201.

<sup>215</sup> Garver, 201.

<sup>216</sup> Manjeet S. Pardesi, "India's Conventional Military Strategy," 12.

<sup>217</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 201.

<sup>218</sup> Garver, 202.

<sup>219</sup> Garver, "Evolution of India's China Policy," 93.

<sup>220</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 37.

Though neither side achieved decisive victory, India successfully maintained the status quo, prevented Pakistan from taking over Kashmir, and further demonstrated its will and ability to stand up to China. By 10 January 1966, India and Pakistan agreed to a post-war settlement called the *Tashkent Agreement* in which both sides agreed to a ceasefire, to return to the pre-5 August 1965 status quo, and to renounce the use of force as a way of settling future disputes.<sup>221</sup>

Since early in 1965, India faced the challenge that China would intervene on Pakistan's behalf over the issue of Kashmir. India ignored Chinese threats of intervention and responded to Pakistani aggression in Kashmir by launching conventional offensive operations into Pakistan, resulting in a ceasefire after six weeks of fighting. Had China intervened, it may have altered the outcome substantially, but China did not do so. The war failed to alter the status quo in Kashmir, and China failed to intervene on behalf of Pakistan.

### **C. CHINA'S CHALLENGE AND INDIA'S RESPONSE—1971 INDO-PAKISTANI WAR**

In 1971, China indirectly challenged India by providing diplomatic and military support to Pakistan over hostilities in East Pakistan. China's relationship with Pakistan, which had continued throughout the 1960s, required India to consider the probability of a Chinese intervention in the event of another war. By the early 1970s, China had improved relations with the United States, which left India isolated and more vulnerable if conflict arose in East Pakistan. Simultaneously, the Bengali population in East Pakistan was being brutally oppressed by the Pakistani military, creating a humanitarian crisis. India demonstrated strategic patience and military proficiency when it defeated Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war, which resulted in an independent Bangladesh and in establishing India as the dominant regional power in South Asia.

What started as an internal political dispute between East Pakistan and West Pakistan turned into refugees fleeing the threat of genocide, deeply effecting the entire sub-continent. The two wings of Pakistan were separated by over 1000 miles and had a range of issues including ethno linguistic differences that created an unstable political

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<sup>221</sup> Ganguly, 47.

environment.<sup>222</sup> The Punjabi dominated West Pakistan politically and economically oppressed East Pakistan, which was predominantly Bengali.<sup>223</sup> By March 1971, after years of failed attempts to achieve resolution, the Bengalis in East Pakistan called for independence from West Pakistan and began large-scale demonstrations.<sup>224</sup> On 25 March 1971, the Pakistani army initiated Operation Searchlight with the purpose of “reducing the number of Bengalis so they were no longer the majority in Pakistan.”<sup>225</sup> The attempted genocide sent an estimated ten million<sup>226</sup> refugees flooding across the borders into India.<sup>227</sup> India, unable to absorb such a wave of people, and disturbed by the humanitarian crisis, intervened on behalf of the Bengalis.<sup>228</sup>

India recognized that its efforts to intervene against Pakistan on behalf of the Bengali people carried the inherent risk that China could enter the war and, therefore, sought other international support. In efforts to mitigate the risk of China’s intervention, India looked for security guarantees from both the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>229</sup> Although India signed a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union on 9 August 1971,<sup>230</sup> the Soviets clearly articulated to India that they did not approve of a military conflict with Pakistan.<sup>231</sup> Simply put, the treaty provided India with support but fell short of a security guarantee. Of note, India only signed the treaty with the Soviet Union when it was apparent

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<sup>222</sup> Jagmohan Meher, “Dynamics of Pakistan’s Disintegration: The Case of East Pakistan 1947–1971,” *India Quarterly*, vol. 7 no. 4 (2015): 300–317.

<sup>223</sup> Pran Chopra, *India’s Second Liberation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1974), 63–65.

<sup>224</sup> Jagmohan Meher, “Dynamics of Pakistan’s Disintegration: The Case of East Pakistan 1947–1971,” 300–317.

<sup>225</sup> Meher, 311.

<sup>226</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 61.

<sup>227</sup> Geryl J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2013), 92–101.

<sup>228</sup> Jagmohan Meher, “Dynamics of Pakistan’s Disintegration: The Case of East Pakistan 1947–1971,” 311.

<sup>229</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 126–127.

<sup>230</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 65.

<sup>231</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, 126–127.

that the United States was wholly unwilling to support Indian efforts in East Pakistan.<sup>232</sup> Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attempted to gain international support for intervention, only to be pressured by the United States not to intervene.<sup>233</sup> Henry Kissinger, U.S. National Security Advisor, insinuated to Gandhi that the likelihood of China's intervention was high and that "it would be impossible to calculate with precision the steps which other great powers might take if India were to initiate hostilities."<sup>234</sup> Additionally, it was public knowledge that U.S. President Richard Nixon and Kissinger were prepared to "leave India to its fate" should the Chinese intervene along the Sino-Indian borders.<sup>235</sup>

The United States complicated India's efforts to resolve the crisis. Not only did the United States attempt to deter India from intervening,<sup>236</sup> but they also encouraged the Chinese to "make some move toward the border" to restrain India from attacking into West Pakistan.<sup>237</sup> In July 1971, Kissinger informed Gandhi that China would intervene on behalf of Pakistan should India intervene in Bangladesh and that the United States would remain neutral.<sup>238</sup> By November 1971, Kissinger modified his assessment on the likelihood of China's intervention when he met with Gandhi in Washington, DC<sup>239</sup> However, the United States made it clear that it did not support Indian efforts in Bangladesh.<sup>240</sup> Therefore, if India chose to liberate the Bengalis, not only would they have to risk war with China, they would be doing it alone.

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<sup>232</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, 126–127

<sup>233</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 11.

<sup>234</sup> Small, 11.

<sup>235</sup> Small, 11.

<sup>236</sup> Small, 11.

<sup>237</sup> Department of State, "Conversation Among President Nixon, The President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and Attorney General Mitchell," *Foreign Relations Documents on South Asia*, Vol E-7 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State 6 Dec. 1971), <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e7/48537.htm>

<sup>238</sup> Pran Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, 63–65.

<sup>239</sup> Chopra, 63–65.

<sup>240</sup> Chopra, 63–65

Despite the threat of China's intervention, India gradually increased its involvement in settling the conflict in East Pakistan, starting with support for Bengali guerillas and culminating in a massive conventional military operation. In early 1971, elements of the Indian army and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), India's intelligence service, provided materiel support and training to Bengali guerillas, named the Mukti Bahini, that were fighting the Pakistani army in East Pakistan.<sup>241</sup> India's use of the Mukti Bahini produced a disruptive force inside of East Pakistan that attrited Pakistani forces and provided critical intelligence to the Indian army and R&AW during preparation for its decisive conventional operation.<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, the Mukti Bahini's efforts enabled India to delay its conventional attack until December when the weather favored offensive operations in East Pakistan and prevented the Chinese from intervening by crossing the snow covered Himalayas.<sup>243</sup>

Contrary to its 1962 stumbles, India's civilian and military leadership achieved unity of effort during its intervention in East Pakistan. In the fall of 1971, India's military prepared for a decisive attack in East Pakistan while Indira Gandhi returned from attempting to gain international support for the intervention.<sup>244</sup> By 3 December 1971, India's strategic patience paid dividends when Pakistan launched airstrikes on Indian airfields.<sup>245</sup> With Pakistan being the aggressor, India could initiate its large-scale operation without the fear of international consternation. Furthermore, India's intelligence services accurately assessed that China had not made the necessary preparations for intervention, and thus decided to move 50 percent of its forces from guarding the Sino-Indian border to assembly areas near East Pakistan.<sup>246</sup> Launching its numerically superior force from attack

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<sup>241</sup> Geryl J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2013), 92–101, 241.

<sup>242</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 61–62.

<sup>243</sup> Owen Bennet Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 172–173.

<sup>244</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 63.

<sup>245</sup> Kapur, 63.

<sup>246</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, 10–11.

positions on 5 December, India conducted a blitzkrieg-like operation that overwhelmed Pakistani forces.<sup>247</sup> On 9 December 1971, General Farman Ali formally contacted the UN prepared to surrender and requesting arrangements for a withdrawal.<sup>248</sup> China utilized its permanent seat on the UN Security Council to “condemn India and call for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of forces.”<sup>249</sup> India ignored the threats and continued to pursue total victory. By 16 December, the Indian Army had defeated the Pakistani Army and had secured East Pakistan’s capitol city, Dacca.<sup>250</sup> India had attained “maximalist goals,”<sup>251</sup> including the capture of 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war,<sup>252</sup> and thereby achieved a decisive victory.

India’s successful war in the face of China’s diplomatic and military support of Pakistan once again demonstrated India’s commitment to balancing against China. India’s liberation of Bangladesh severely crippled the Pakistani state and tilted the balance of power squarely in India’s direction. China’s attempts to prevent India from becoming a credible competitor failed. India demonstrated tremendous political and military strategic coordination in the establishment of Bangladesh. Rather than what we would have likely seen had India chosen to bandwagon, with China extending its sphere of influence, we see what we would expect to see with India balancing against China: India emerged as the dominant regional power in South Asia and gained international prestige.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Chapter III demonstrated that the convergence of Sino-Pakistani relations presented India with a massive security challenge that India successfully faced, continuing to balance against China. China’s threats of intervention preceding and during two Indo-Pakistani

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<sup>247</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 63.

<sup>248</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics*, 10–11.

<sup>249</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 20.

<sup>250</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 68–69.

<sup>251</sup> S. Paul Kapur, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security, and the Pakistani State*, 62.

<sup>252</sup> Kapur, 70.



wars forced Indian military planners to address a wide range of complex scenarios that complicated India's ability to concentrate military forces for decisive actions.<sup>253</sup> India could not view conflict with Pakistan as an isolated security challenge; instead, the Indians had to acknowledge the threat of a two-front war against both Pakistan and China.

Had India chosen to bandwagon with China, we would have seen more cooperation between all three countries rather than two Indo-Pakistani wars. China might have even arbitrated a resolution between the two conflicting states over its disputed territory in Kashmir. India would likely have made border concessions to China as well. Ultimately, had India chosen to bandwagon, we would have seen China extend its sphere of influence in South Asia.

However, India did not bandwagon with China; instead, India chose to balance against China, fighting two wars against Pakistan despite the threat of China's intervention. India continued to modernize its military and deploy them in contested areas. Rather than increasing cooperation with China, when faced with the threats of war from China, India instead sought security partnerships with China's rivals, the United States and the Soviet Union. Unwilling to submit to Chinese hegemony, India demonstrated commitment to balancing and emerged as the dominant power in south Asia.

Although China did not intervene militarily against India in 1965 or 1971, China's relationship with Pakistan increased the foundation of its security relationship toward India. Mao underscored importance of the Sino-Pakistani relationship by the telling Pakistan "if there is nuclear war, it is Beijing and not Rawalpindi that will be the target."<sup>254</sup> India's defeat of Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh demonstrated India's potential as a strategic competitor and decreased the conventional leverage China could count on from Pakistan. However, China had a much stronger deterrent in the works. In Chapter IV, I examine how India responds when China's challenge goes nuclear.

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<sup>253</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 195.

<sup>254</sup> Garver, 195.

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#### **IV. CHINA AND INDIA GO NUCLEAR**

Chapter III demonstrated India's continued commitment to balancing against China when India chose to fight two wars with Pakistan, despite the threats of Chinese intervention, and emerged as South Asia's leading power. Indian balancing faced the challenge not just of Chinese conventional power, it also faced the challenge of Chinese nuclear capabilities. Entering the 1960s, China and India both desired a more prestigious role for themselves in the international community, both were rising powers seeking to become great powers, and both faced the decision of whether to utilize atomic power and, if so, whether to acquire nuclear weapons. China developed a nuclear weapons capability, which it tested in 1964. A nuclear-enabled China significantly challenged India's ability to defend its interests in both the diplomatic arena and in war. Furthermore, India's leaders had to consider every dispute with China as a potential catalyst for escalation, which could result in them being targeted by nuclear weapons. A nuclear-armed China had the potential to deter other nuclear powers from intervening in a Sino-Indian dispute, leaving India isolated, vulnerable, and still facing threats on its borders.

India could have chosen to bandwagon with China after the Chinese acquired nuclear weapons. Had it done so, we would likely have seen India settle border disputes and reduce the chance of conflict with a nuclear-armed China to include acquiescing on issues relating to Tibet. We would likely have seen India diplomatically support China in the international arena. Additionally, we may have seen India pursue nuclear protection from China. If had India chosen to balance against China, we would likely have seen India maintain a competitive stance regarding its outstanding border dispute as well as issues relating to Tibet. We would likely have seen India increase funding for the research and development of nuclear weapons. We would likely have seen India publicly condemn China's nuclear tests. We would likely have seen India seek security guarantees in the form of extended deterrence from China's rivals. Additionally, we would likely have seen India take significant risks to develop and test nuclear weapons to adequately deter potential conflict with China.

This chapter shows that India, in the face of a nuclear challenge, chose to further balance against China: India pursued internal and external balancing strategies to respond to China's nuclear challenge. The first section of the chapter describes China's acquisition of nuclear weapons in the 1960s. In 1964, China tested a nuclear weapon, emerged as the first non-western nuclear power, and by default was internationally recognized as a nuclear weapon state (NWS).<sup>255</sup> The second section shows that India responded to China's nuclear test by pursuing internal and external balancing strategies. India pursued security guarantees from the United States and the Soviet Union to address immediately the challenge of China as a NWS. After failing to achieve security guarantees from China's rivals, India continued to devote resources toward its nuclear program culminating with the conduct of a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974. The third section examines how China advanced its nuclear challenge by joining the non-proliferation movement while proliferating nuclear technology to Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, and other developing countries. China's increased participation in the international community earned them a seat on the UN Security Council; meanwhile, its bad faith proliferation actions continued to plague India. The fourth section shows that India responded to China's proliferation efforts and increased international prestige by testing its own nuclear weapons in 1998. India faced tremendous external pressure not to test nuclear weapons but prioritized balancing against China, apparently deciding that the threat posed by a nuclear enabled China was far too great of a security risk. Once again, India balanced in response to China.

#### **A. CHINA'S 1964 NUCLEAR TEST AND THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY**

After 1964, India's neighbor, with which it had an active border dispute, was a nuclear power, capable of inflicting serious devastation on India. China's decision to acquire nuclear weapon capabilities was not due to India; instead, China was responding

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<sup>255</sup> George Bunn and John B. Rhinelander, "Looking Back: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Then and Now," *Arms Control Association* (July/August 2008), 3 <http://www.armscontrol.org>, [http://fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Bunn\\_Looking\\_Back.pdf](http://fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Bunn_Looking_Back.pdf).

to threats from the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>256</sup> The John F. Kennedy administration feared that a nuclear-armed China would be more aggressive in promoting and conducting wars of “national liberation” across Asia.<sup>257</sup> Using satellite imagery, U.S. intelligence agencies observed Chinese nuclear facilities in August of 1960.<sup>258</sup> Kennedy’s Under Secretary of State claimed that a nuclear China would be “far more dangerous, in many ways, than even the [pro-Nationalist Chinese] Committee of One Million (Republic of China) would have us think.”<sup>259</sup> China’s nuclear program prompted the United States to seek cooperative efforts with the Soviet Union to deter China from acquiring nuclear weapons, which included a Soviet proposal of a preemptive nuclear attack on China. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union had withdrawn its support to China’s nuclear program and by the early 1960s, agreed to collaborate with the United States on efforts to halt proliferation.<sup>260</sup> On 25 July 1962, representatives from the United States, Soviet Union, and Britain signed the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), which effectively banned the aboveground testing of nuclear weapons.<sup>261</sup>

In response to U.S.–Soviet cooperation on non-proliferation, China’s official stance was that “China has long ceased to place any hope in the Soviet leaders in developing its own nuclear strength to resist the U.S. nuclear threats.”<sup>262</sup> China refused to sign the PTBT and subsequently described the Soviet Union as a co-conspirator with the United States in keeping China vulnerable to U.S. imperialism.<sup>263</sup> One of China’s most widely read newspapers stated that the United States was “wooing the Soviet Union, opposing China,

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<sup>256</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 317. Also see, Thomas C. Reed and Danny B. Stillman, *The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation* (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2009), 89–93.

<sup>257</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 186.

<sup>258</sup> Garver, 186.

<sup>259</sup> Gordon H. Chang, “JFK, China and the Bomb,” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 74 no. 4 (March 1998): 1288, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1894411>.

<sup>260</sup> Morton H. Halperin, “China and Nuclear Proliferation: Part I,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 22, Issue 9 (1966): 5.

<sup>261</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 187.

<sup>262</sup> Morton H. Halperin, “China and Nuclear Proliferation: Part I,” 5.

<sup>263</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 187.

and poisoning Sino-Soviet relations.”<sup>264</sup> Mao Zedong released a public statement calling the test ban treaty “nuclear blackmail” and saying the world should defy the U.S., British, and Soviet efforts to limit nuclear proliferation.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, China publicly claimed that the spread of nuclear weapons would deter an attack on China or its periphery from the United States or the Soviet Union.<sup>266</sup> This signaled China’s determination to acquire a nuclear weapon and a future willingness to proliferate, both threats with which India would be forced to contend. China viewed the NPT as a “vestige of colonialism” by discriminating against the developing world, and therefore, would not support efforts to prevent other nations from acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>267</sup> China unleashed propaganda efforts with the intent to convince the international community that its efforts to develop a nuclear capability were moderate, responsible, and a result of the threats posed by the United States and Soviet Union.<sup>268</sup>

China determined that its nuclear weapons would help deter the super powers from supporting small and medium states on its periphery.<sup>269</sup> On 16 October 1964, China successfully tested a nuclear weapon in a remote portion of Xinjiang province.<sup>270</sup> The non-proliferation regime, led by the United States and Soviet Union, legitimized China as a NWS. In 1964, the United States and the Soviet Union developed the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which attempted to prevent further proliferation and charted a path toward future disarmament.<sup>271</sup> The NPT allowed the NWSs to retain its weapons in the short term

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<sup>264</sup> Gordon H. Chang, “JFK, China and the Bomb,” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 74 no. 4 (March 1998): 1288, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1894411>.

<sup>265</sup> Chang, 1304.

<sup>266</sup> Morton H. Halperin, “China and Nuclear Proliferation: Part I,” 5.

<sup>267</sup> Zachary S. Davis, “China’s Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?” *Asian Survey*, vol. 35 no. 6 (June 2006): 588–589, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2645711>.

<sup>268</sup> Morton H. Halperin, “China and Nuclear Proliferation: Part I,” 9.

<sup>269</sup> Kuo-kang Shao, *Zhou Enlai and the Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy*, 246–248.

<sup>270</sup> Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 105.

<sup>271</sup> George Bunn and John B. Rhineland, “Looking Back: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Then and Now,” 3.

with the eventual goal of disarmament.<sup>272</sup> Additionally, states who had not tested by 1967 were considered non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) and were allowed access to civilian nuclear technology and material; however, the NNWS were subject to inspection from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).<sup>273</sup> China achieved the status as a NWS despite attempts by Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union to prevent them from doing so.<sup>274</sup> China was acutely aware of the importance of international perceptions concerning nuclear proliferation; however, they were not prepared to cooperate on nonproliferation efforts.

For India, this meant that a nuclear-armed China could attempt to deter the Soviet Union or the United States from intervening in a Sino-Indian conflict. Furthermore, China followed up its nuclear tests by stockpiling close to 150 nuclear weapons that could be mounted to China's newly acquired medium-range ballistic missiles capable of targeting India from Chinese firing positions in Tibet.<sup>275</sup> China had tested nuclear weapons and advanced its capabilities just in time to be legitimately recognized by the international community as a NWS while India had missed the opportunity to go nuclear before the negotiation of the NPT.

## **B. INDIA'S RESPONSE**

In response to China's nuclear capabilities, India could either balance or bandwagon. Had India decided to bandwagon, we would likely have seen India acquiesce to China's nuclear dominance and not attempt to offset China with its own capabilities. If India decided to balance, we would likely have seen India advance its nuclear program and develop nuclear weapons to counter China's nuclear challenge. Ultimately, despite internal

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<sup>272</sup> George Bunn and John B. Rhineland, "Looking Back: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Then and Now," 3. See also, "The Global Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime," *Council on foreign Relations* (1 April 2018), <https://www.cfr.org/report/global-nuclear-nonproliferation-regime>.

<sup>273</sup> George Bunn and John B. Rhineland, "Looking Back: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Then and Now," 3.

<sup>274</sup> Morton H. Halperin, *China and the Bomb* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 91.

<sup>275</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 28–29.

debate, India chose to balance and pursue nuclear weapons culminating with a nuclear test in 1974.

India invested early in atomic energy, which would later enable them to respond to China's nuclear challenge. India's pursuit of nuclear technology dated back to 1945 when Homi J. Bhaba, an Indian physicist, persuaded a wealthy and influential Indian family to grant him money to establish and run a center dedicated to nuclear science.<sup>276</sup> After achieving independence in 1947, Indian leaders were interested in the use of atomic energy as a means to modernize.<sup>277</sup> A decade later, in 1954, India created the Department of Atomic Energy (AEC) to continue India's nuclear progression.<sup>278</sup> Throughout the 1950s, India did not pursue nuclear weapons; however, its investments in nuclear infrastructure and research had the potential for serving dual purposes should it have chosen to exercise what became known as the "nuclear option."<sup>279</sup>

Although China's nuclear test in 1964 directly triggered India's decision to balance by conducting its own nuclear test, the debate had initially gained traction after India's defeat along its border in 1962.<sup>280</sup> India's new perception of China as major threat initiated the discussion about whether India should develop nuclear weapons.<sup>281</sup> In December of 1962, Nehru did not think that China would sacrifice the resources required to build a nuclear weapon and called for restraint.<sup>282</sup> Regardless, opposition parties in India began arguing in favor of a reversal in policy. During budgetary discussions in early 1963, a member of the parliament argued that "only those who wish to see Russians or Chinese ruling India will oppose the development of nuclear weapons. I beg the Prime Minister to

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<sup>276</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons," *International Security*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 149–151. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539297>.

<sup>277</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 17.

<sup>278</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons," 150–151.

<sup>279</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 13–59.

<sup>280</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 317.

<sup>281</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, 23

<sup>282</sup> Morton H. Halperin, *China and the Bomb*, 111–112.



make full use of our research in atomic energy.”<sup>283</sup> Prior to his death in 1964, Nehru publicly rejected proposals to acquire nuclear weapons immediately;<sup>284</sup> however, he privately supported efforts to ready a nuclear option.<sup>285</sup> Again, had India decided to bandwagon, the debate would have centered on settling the border dispute with a nuclear-enabled China, not developing a balancing strategy.

In January of 1965, merely a few months after China’s first nuclear tests, the Congress Party’s debate regarding nuclear policy intensified at its annual conference.<sup>286</sup> Congress Parliamentary Party’s general secretary, Bibhuti Mishra, argued if India failed to acquire nuclear weapons or at least stay parallel with China’s nuclear program, then the Congress Party would likely lose power.<sup>287</sup> Additionally, Mishra suggested that India’s defeat in 1962, coupled with China’s nuclear test, had severely damaged India’s international reputation, requiring an immediate change in policy.<sup>288</sup> The discussion following China’s nuclear challenge caused significant debate with the Indian public; leaders faced domestic pressure to respond.<sup>289</sup> India’s newly elected Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, refused to comment on the future direction of India’s nuclear program, except that India would reconsider its nuclear policy if China’s nuclear capabilities matured.<sup>290</sup> Subsequently, Shastri approved the subterranean nuclear explosion project (SNEP), which continued to progress India’s nuclear option.<sup>291</sup> Additionally, India created a space program that facilitated the development of satellites and rockets, which could also

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<sup>283</sup> George Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 46.

<sup>284</sup> Sumit Ganguly, “India’s Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Dehli’s Nuclear Weapons,” 153.

<sup>285</sup> George Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 63. See also, Leonard S. Spector, *Nuclear Proliferation Today* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1984), 27–28.

<sup>286</sup> Perkovich, 27–28.

<sup>287</sup> Perkovich, 89.

<sup>288</sup> Perkovich, 89.

<sup>289</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 318–319.

<sup>290</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 27–28.

<sup>291</sup> Sidhu, 28–29.

be used toward the weaponization of a nuclear device.<sup>292</sup> In sum, India's immediate response to China's test was to advance its nuclear program in peaceful ways that would allow for a future policy decision.

India further responded by ensuring that China heard its disapproval and that the international community could not feign ignorance of India's frustrations.<sup>293</sup> Speaking to the United Nations' Disarmament Commission in 1966, India's representative, Vishnu C. Trivedi, publicly scolded China and declared that "the explosion conducted by the People's Republic of China is an attack not only on all that we stand for and all the efforts that we are making but it is also an attack on all of humanity."<sup>294</sup> Trivedi went on to highlight India's distrust of China by declaring that "it has become habit for the People's Republic of China to defy with impunity all that the international community does."<sup>295</sup> Had India decided to bandwagon, we would not have seen displays of public outrage and diplomatic rebuke.

By the late 1960s, India continued to balance despite heightened pressure from the international community to sign the NPT and despite domestic uncertainty following an unexpected leadership change. In January 1966, Lal Bahadur Shastri died of a heart attack, and Jawaharal Nehru's granddaughter, Indira Gandhi, assumed the role of Prime Minister.<sup>296</sup> In addition to inheriting a dismal economic situation, Gandhi had to tackle India's policy toward nuclear weapons and the NPT. The Gandhi government pressed the leadership of the NPT regime, and especially the United States, to include language in the treaty that facilitated the NNWS to conduct peaceful explosions.<sup>297</sup> The United States countered by offering to provide NNWS peaceful nuclear explosive services, which would

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<sup>292</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 321.

<sup>293</sup> Sam Pope Brewer, "India and Japan Denounce China: Tell Arms Unit Test is Peril to Man and Affront to U.N.," *New York Times* (May 15, 1965), <https://www.nytimes.com/1965/05/15/archives/india-and-japan-denounce-china-tell-arms-unit-test-is-peril-to-man.html>.

<sup>294</sup> Brewer.

<sup>295</sup> Brewer.

<sup>296</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 96

<sup>297</sup> Perkovich, 127.

prevent India from conducting its own tests.<sup>298</sup> In October of 1967, India announced to the UN General Assembly that the terms of the NPT were unacceptable and that India refused to sign.<sup>299</sup> Like China, India viewed the NPT as a reminder of the colonial era where the industrialized western countries dictated policy to the developing world.<sup>300</sup>

India also sought to balance externally against China, pursuing security guarantees from China's rivals, to include the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union.<sup>301</sup> In 1964, the United States decided against providing India a security guarantee for fear of alienating Pakistan, which at the time was assisting the United States execute its Cold War strategy against the Soviet Union.<sup>302</sup> Britain and the United States pulled support from India at the outset of the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war, which severely degraded, if not destroyed, prospects for a security guarantee.<sup>303</sup> India's efforts with the Soviet Union looked promising due to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and the signing of an Indo-Soviet peace treaty;<sup>304</sup> however, India still had considerable reason to doubt that the Soviets' pledge of security would hold given the broader nuclear dynamics.<sup>305</sup> Furthermore, India's domestic political entities could not reach a consensus on how a security guarantee would be structured to preserve the appearance of non-alignment and provide a credible deterrent to China.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 90, 135.

<sup>299</sup> Perkovich, 139.

<sup>300</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 120.

<sup>301</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 318–319.

<sup>302</sup> Joyce Battle, "India and Pakistan- On the Nuclear Threshold," *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book* No. 6 (April 20, 2018), [https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008\\_05/lookingback](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_05/lookingback). Also see, S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "The Transformation of U.S.–India Relations: An Explanation for the Rapprochement and Prospects for the Future," *Asian Survey*, vol. 47 no. 4 (July/August 2007): 643–646. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2007.47.4.642>.

<sup>303</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?* 28.

<sup>304</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 322.

<sup>305</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?* 28.

<sup>306</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 139.

Instead, India decided to focus on internal nuclear solutions in response to China's challenge. On 18 May 1974, after close to ten years of debating and developing a response to China's acquisition of nuclear weapons, India conducted a peaceful nuclear explosion.<sup>307</sup> India had concealed its preparations to avoid protest from members of the non-proliferation regime.<sup>308</sup> Gandhi immediately followed the explosion with statements that reinforced the peaceful nature of the test and reaffirmed India's commitment not to pursue nuclear weapons.<sup>309</sup> India's defense minister, Jagjivan Ram, and a host of nuclear scientists reinforced Gandhi's message by publicly proclaiming the test did not serve any military purpose.<sup>310</sup> Nonetheless, in 1978, the United States demonstrated its displeasure by placing sanctions on India through the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act and ceasing nuclear cooperation.<sup>311</sup> Furthermore, the United States spent the next three decades focusing much of its non-proliferation efforts on preventing India from acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>312</sup>

### C. CHINA EXPANDS NUCLEAR CHALLENGE

From the 1980s to the early 1990s, China further advanced its challenge by indirectly pressuring India through the nonproliferation regime and international community while simultaneously proliferating technology, expertise, and material to Iran, Pakistan, and other developing countries.<sup>313</sup> Despite China's bad faith actions, the international community, especially the United States, took little notice of China's nuclear

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<sup>307</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?* 28–29.

<sup>308</sup> Thomas C. Reed and Danny B. Stillman, *The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation*, 89–93.

<sup>309</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 178.

<sup>310</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Dehli's Nuclear Weapons," 160.

<sup>311</sup> Anupam Srivastava and Seema Gahlaut, "India and the NPT: Separating Substantive Facts from Normative Fiction," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 34 no. 2 (30 March 2010): 285, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160903560403>.

<sup>312</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "The Transformation of U.S.–India Relations: An Explanation for the Rapprochement and Prospects for the Future," 647.

<sup>313</sup> Zachary S. Davis, "China's Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?" 587–593.

assistance programs. China continued to reap benefits as a NWS while India was left out. As China's prestige as a NWS advanced, India became diplomatically isolated and militarily vulnerable.

China increasingly challenged India in the 1980s as it joined international institutions, pledging support for nuclear non-proliferation efforts and, therefore, elevating its international prestige. Member states of the U.S.-backed non-proliferation regime had been trying to convince China to sign the NPT since the early 1970s.<sup>314</sup> In 1984, China made its first step toward cooperation by joining the IAEA, which opened its civilian nuclear program to international supervision;<sup>315</sup> however, one of the main catalysts to join was gaining access to enriched uranium.<sup>316</sup> In March of 1992, China signed the NPT and agreed to guidelines laid out by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to gain international prestige and advance its economic and political interests.<sup>317</sup> China's participation in the NPT led the United States to lift sanctions on China again demonstrating how China's bad faith actions continued and were not deterred by the non-proliferation regime.<sup>318</sup> More importantly, China elevated its international status from being associated with non-signatories like India, Pakistan, and Israel.<sup>319</sup>

Had China desired non-proliferation rather than the prestige and power over its neighbors that joining the international community brought, it would not have proliferated nuclear material while committing to non-proliferation. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, China secretly supported Pakistan's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons despite public

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<sup>314</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 539.

<sup>315</sup> Garver, 539.

<sup>316</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, 33.

<sup>317</sup> Zachary S. Davis, "China's Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?" 592–593.

<sup>318</sup> Department of State, "China's Adherence to Missile Control Guidelines." Tracking # 219947 (Washington, DC: Bureau of Public Affairs, February 21, 1992), <https://fas.org/nuke/control/mtr/news/920309-219947.htm>.

<sup>319</sup> Zachary S. Davis, "China's Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?" 592–593.

statements suggesting they supported nonproliferation.<sup>320</sup> China also violated non-proliferation guidelines for Iran,<sup>321</sup> signing secret agreements in 1989 and 1991 to provide Iran with nuclear technology.<sup>322</sup> After years of denying the existence of nuclear cooperation with Iran, China finally admitted in 1991 to signing contracts with the Iranians where nuclear technology would be transferred.<sup>323</sup> By the time that China joined the NPT in 1992, they had already provided Pakistan with enough technical assistance and material to create a “self-sustaining nuclear weapons production capacity.”<sup>324</sup> Furthermore, China provided Pakistan with ballistic missiles that could serve as delivery systems for nuclear weapons in August of 1993, nearly a year after signing the NPT.<sup>325</sup>

The international community enabled China’s challenge. China was not condemned for its proliferation activity for several reasons. China avoided sanctions and diffused international consternation due to its role in six party talks with North Korea<sup>326</sup> and promising to the United States to conform to non-proliferation efforts.<sup>327</sup> Furthermore, the United States “hesitated to condemn Beijing, apparently fearing repercussions on U.S. companies doing business in China and on overall ties with the Chinese,” again demonstrating an increase in China’s economic, military and diplomatic power and prestige.<sup>328</sup> The United States was aware of Pakistan’s nuclear program and China’s collusion; however, the United States determined that the contribution made by China and

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<sup>320</sup> Garver, “The Security Dilemma in Sino-Indian Relations,” *India Review*, vol. 1, no. 4 (2007): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480208404640>.

<sup>321</sup> Zachary S. Davis, “China’s Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?” 590.

<sup>322</sup> Davis 590.

<sup>323</sup> Davis 590.

<sup>324</sup> Garver, “The Security Dilemma in Sino-Indian Relations,” 9.

<sup>325</sup> Garver, 10.

<sup>326</sup> Zachary S. Davis, “China’s Nonproliferation and Export Control Policies: Boom or Bust for the NPT Regime?” 594

<sup>327</sup> “China’s Nuclear Exports and Assistance to Pakistan,” *Center for Nonproliferation International Studies for the Nuclear Threat Initiative* (Washington, DC, 2002), <http://archive.li/LDq68#selection-1889.17-1889.96> and <http://www.nti.org/db/china/npakpos.htm/>.

<sup>328</sup> Kathy Chen, “Beijing Admits to Sale of Ring Magnets to Pakistan in Bid to Clear U.S. Tension,” *Wall Street Journal*, 15 April 1996, p. A15.

Pakistan in the Cold War superseded non-proliferation efforts.<sup>329</sup> In 1980, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown communicated via diplomatic cable to China's Vice Premier, Deng Xiaoping, that the United States' "big problem with Pakistan was its attempts to get a nuclear program. Although we still object to its doing so, we will now set that aside for the time being and concentrate on strengthening Pakistan against potential Soviet action."<sup>330</sup>

China utilized its membership in the non-proliferation regime to deter India from acquiring nuclear weapons. In April of 1995, China supported a UN Security Council Resolution that attempted to re-assure NNWS, especially India, that they would not be subject to nuclear attack and to cooperate on non-proliferation efforts.<sup>331</sup> China's placed even greater pressure on India by using its position in the UN and its growing relationship with the United States to downplay India's strategic concerns. To make matters worse, China once again conducted nuclear tests just as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was approved by the UN General Assembly in September of 1996.<sup>332</sup> China's 30 July test took place on the same day the UN was to resume final negotiations on the CTBT.<sup>333</sup> Supporters of the CTBT, to include China and the United States, pressured India to sign the treaty.<sup>334</sup> When it became clear that the CTBT would not receive unanimous approval at the UN Disarmament Conference, China and the U.S. collaborated together to move the vote to the UN General Assembly where a majority of votes is required.<sup>335</sup> The

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<sup>329</sup> Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, 35–36.

<sup>330</sup> U.S. Department of Defense Cable 06242 to State Department, *Meeting between Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping*, Secretary of Defense, 8 Jan 1980, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/347015-doc-3-1-31-80.html> accessed 17 April 2018.

<sup>331</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 742.

<sup>332</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty First Century*, 117.

<sup>333</sup> Seth Faison, "China Sets Off Nuclear Test, Then Announces Moratorium," *New York Times*, 30 July 1996, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/30/world/china-sets-off-nuclear-test-then-announces-moratorium.html> accessed 22 April 2018.

<sup>334</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 742.

<sup>335</sup> Garver, 743.

CTBT passed overwhelmingly, with votes tallying 158 to 3. Only Bhutan and Libya voted with India.<sup>336</sup>

#### **D. INDIA'S RESPONSE: POKHRAN II**

Faced with an increased nuclear challenge from China, India was again presented a choice whether to balance or bandwagon. Had India chosen to bandwagon, we would likely have seen India settle its border dispute with China and make concessions on Tibet. We would likely also have seen India succumb to international pressure and seek nuclear cooperation with China. Had India chosen to balance, we would likely seen India continue to progress its nuclear program. Furthermore, we would likely have seen India diplomatically oppose China's nuclear behavior.

In the face of China's increased nuclear challenge, India continued to balance against China. India responded to China's growing nuclear challenge by developing missiles and testing nuclear weapons despite massive pressure from the international community and attempts by China to lure India into an entente. After initial nuclear tests in 1974, India continued to develop its nuclear options; however, until the late 1990s, India refrained from testing.<sup>337</sup> From the early 1980s to the late 1990s, India entered a "period of restraint," choosing not to execute a test, but continuing to make significant investments and advancements in its nuclear program.<sup>338</sup> India's increased funding for the nuclear weapons program facilitated the creation of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) with a purpose to develop intermediate- and medium-range ballistic missiles which could be utilized as delivery systems for nuclear weapons.<sup>339</sup> After a 1989 test of a medium range missile, India media outlets reported that "armed with a nuclear

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<sup>336</sup> Garver, 743.

<sup>337</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Dehli's Nuclear Weapons," 161–162.

<sup>338</sup> Ganguly, 161–162.

<sup>339</sup> Ganguly, 163–164.



warhead, the Agni [missile] offers the potential to put India on par with China as far as military deterrence is concerned.”<sup>340</sup>

By the early 1990s, China attempted to form an entente with India, which could have derailed India’s desires for nuclear weapons, had they chosen to bandwagon.<sup>341</sup> After significant domestic uprisings across China to include Tiananmen Square, Beijing determined that India could exacerbate its problems, and therefore, decided to repair relationships with New Delhi.<sup>342</sup> India agreed to pursue confidence-building measures with China; however, the perceived cooperation did not lead to any significant changes in the status quo along its disputed borders or in regards to Tibet.<sup>343</sup> Furthermore, India had significant reason to question China’s sincerity to act in good faith. Just prior to its nuclear weapons test, India’s defense minister, George Fernandes, publicly stated on Indian television that China was “potential threat number one” due to them having “nuclear weapons stockpiled in Tibet” on top of providing “Pakistan with both missiles and nuclear know-how.”<sup>344</sup> Fernandes called for India to be prepared to make “real economic sacrifices” in the pursuit of a realistic deterrent to China’s threat.<sup>345</sup>

India increased its balancing response by testing nuclear weapons and publicly alerting the United States to the dangers of China’s rise. In May of 1998, India conducted five nuclear tests on three different types of nuclear weapons.<sup>346</sup> The tests immediately drew the attention of the international community, and India did not hesitate to respond. On 13 May 1998, the New York Times published the letter that Indian Prime Minister Atal

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<sup>340</sup> George Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 301.

<sup>341</sup> Garver, *China’s Quest*, 734–750.

<sup>342</sup> Garver, 734–750.

<sup>343</sup> Jonathon Holslag, “The Persistent Military Security Dilemma between China and India,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 32 no. 6 (December 17, 2009): 816–824. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390903189592>.

<sup>344</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty First Century*, 117.

<sup>345</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 336.

<sup>346</sup> Bhumitra Chakma, “Toward Pkhran II: Explaining India’s nuclearisation process,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 31 no. 1 (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005), DOI:10.1017/S0026749X04001416.

Bihari Vajpayee wrote to President Bill Clinton explaining India's reasons for conducting the test:

I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, especially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders [China], a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to unresolved border problem[s]. To add to the distrust... [China] materially helped another neighbor of ours become a covert nuclear weapons state.<sup>347</sup>

Not only did Vajpayee's message reach the United States and the international community, it was also a clear warning to China. Short of war, India engaged in the strongest possible balancing against China by both testing nuclear weapons and publicly alerting the world to China as a fundamental threat. Additionally, India urged the United States to view India's response to China's rise and challenging behavior from India's perspective. In an address to the Asia Summit in 1998, Vajpayee called on America to recognize the value of having a democratic partner in Asia and for the Americans to jettison its reluctance to accept India as a "responsible member of the international community."<sup>348</sup>

## E. CONCLUSION

India's will to balance against China was so high that it defied the pressure of the international community's calls for nonproliferation. Had India decided to bandwagon, we would likely have seen cooperative agreements with China to include resolution of its border disputes. India may have sought economic cooperation with China to mitigate the economic sanctions imposed by the United States in the wake of the 1974 test. Had India chose to bandwagon, we would likely have diverted resources away from developing nuclear weapons in favor of economic and developmental priorities. Instead, India chose

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<sup>347</sup> A. B. Vajpayee, "Nuclear Anxiety; Indian's Letter to Clinton On the Nuclear Testing," *New York Times*, 13 May 1998, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/13/world/nuclear-anxiety-indian-s-letter-to-clinton-on-the-nuclear-testing.html>.

<sup>348</sup> Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in an address to the *Asia Society*, "India, USA and the World: Let us work together to solve the Political-Economic Y2K Problem," 28 September 1998. <https://asiasociety.org/india-usa-and-world-let-us-work-together-solve-political-economic-y2k-problem>

to balance against China by defying external pressures and coercion to acquire nuclear weapons. Despite facing a nuclear-armed China, India refused to settle its disputed borders.

China demonstrated that it will go to great lengths to appear compliant with international norms and institutions while simultaneously acting in bad faith. Furthermore, China utilized its position on the UN Security Council to condemn India's nuclear test and to prevent India from being able to join the council as a permanent member in the future.<sup>349</sup>

The United States did not assist India in its search for a credible deterrent against nuclear China. Furthermore, the United States was aware of China's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear program and chose to prioritize relations with China over India's requests for resolution that satisfied India's interests.

The international community and the United States initially placed India's nuclear tests in the context of its relationship with Pakistan and failed to recognize India's deepest concern, China.<sup>350</sup> After the initial smoke had settled after India's nuclear tests, it was India who signaled to the United States that a closer security partnership would be required in the future. Prime Minister Vajpayee reinforced this message declaring that "Indo-U.S. ties based on equality and mutuality of interests is going to be the mainstay of tomorrow's stable, democratic world order."<sup>351</sup> India highlighted its decision to test nuclear weapons was in response to China's rise and its unresolved border disputes; however, India was also alerting the world to perhaps the most significant challenge yet, China's maritime coercion expansion into the IOR.

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<sup>349</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 90.

<sup>350</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 189.

<sup>351</sup> Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "India, USA and the World: Let us work together to solve the Political-Economic Y2K Problem," *Asia Society* (New York: 28 September 1998), <https://asiasociety.org/india-usa-and-world-let-us-work-together-solve-political-economic-y2k-problem>

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## **V. CHINA'S EXPANSION**

Chapter IV demonstrated that India chose to balance in the face of China's nuclear challenge. India exercised its nuclear option despite facing significant pressure from the international community. After exposing their nuclear capability to the international community, India's leaders responded to criticism by announcing that China was their most pressing security concern and that they acquired nuclear weapons as a proportional balancing action.

Starting in the late 1990s, India also signaled to the United States that China's rise was a pressing challenge. Continuing to today, China has leveraged its massive economic growth to assert control in disputed territory and to expand into the Indian Ocean Region. After building a web of man-made islands on disputed territory in the South China Sea, China rapidly expanded their naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region to complement its massive economic expansion. China's encroachment into the Indian Ocean Region threatens to displace India as the dominant power in the region and further pressures India to bandwagon. In the case of crisis or conflict, China could now utilize its increased presence in the Indian Ocean Region to disrupt India's sea based commerce, which would cripple the Indian economy and cause significant regional and global instability. Essentially, China's massive expansion into the Indian Ocean Region threatens to isolate India and prevent it from being able to protect and pursue its strategic interests.

In the face of China's expansionist challenge, had India decided to bandwagon, there probably would have been no change in India's maritime strategy and defense posture, which has traditionally been land-focused. Also, we would likely have seen India seek economic and security cooperation with China. Had India decided to bandwagon, we would likely also have seen India stay diplomatically neutral regarding China's increased assertiveness in the South China Sea as well in its response to the Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, we would likely have seen India settle border disputes with China and take steps to minimize the chances of confrontation.

Had India balanced against China's expansionist challenge, we would likely have seen increased military spending and modernization efforts to challenge China in the maritime domain. We would likely have seen India pursue stronger relationships with the United States and other countries actively concerned with China's behavior. We would likely have seen India take a competitive position concerning China's expansion into the Indian Ocean Region and continue to publicly criticize China. Furthermore, we would likely have seen India continue to confront China on its disputed borders.

This chapter shows that India, in the face of China's economic and military expansion into the Indian Ocean Region, increased its commitment to balance against China's rise. The first section demonstrates how China incrementally transitioned its challenging behavior from the South China Sea into the Indian Ocean Region where India has long been the primary power.<sup>352</sup> China's expansion has ignored territorial disputes in the South China Sea and on the Indian sub-continent in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, which India claims.<sup>353</sup> China's naval expansion into the Indian Ocean Region is being coupled with an ambitious Belt and Road Initiative which surrounds India with increased People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) presence and Chinese influence. The second section shows how India responded to China's increased assertiveness and expansion into the Indian Ocean Region by pursuing internal and external balancing strategies. India made substantial investments in defense modernization with an increased emphasis on the maritime domain. India has increased security ties with other democratic nations that share concerns over China's challenging behavior, particularly the United States. Additionally, India has responded to China's Belt and Road Initiative by pursuing economic and developmental ventures that attempt to compete with China. The third section shows how India has maintained its balancing postures along its disputed borders to deter China's incremental expansion. The chapter concludes with a summary of India's continued balancing actions in response to China's expansion.

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<sup>352</sup> James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "China's Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3 (June 2008): 367, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390802024700>.

<sup>353</sup> Fahad Shah, "Does the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Worry India," *Aljazeera*, February 22, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/02/china-pakistan-economic-corridor-worry-india-170208063418124.html>.

## A. CHINA'S CHALLENGE EXPANDS AND MILITARIZES

Over the past two decades, despite international consternation, China asserted control over disputed territory in the South China Sea, positioning themselves into the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>354</sup> China coupled its naval expansion into the Indian Ocean Region with the Belt and Road Initiative, previously known as One Belt One Road until August 2017 when China insisted on the international community calling it Belt and Road Initiative; an ambitious strategy to create trade corridors that originate around India's periphery and connect to mainland China.<sup>355</sup> As a part of Belt and Road Initiative, China has developed a network of ports surrounding India's borders, often referred to as a "string of pearls."<sup>356</sup> China has funded the port construction with high-interest rate loans that exceed the recipient countries capacities to make the agreed upon payments.<sup>357</sup> After the recipient countries default on the loans or fall into the "debt trap," China renegotiates terms that give the Chinese increased control and ownership of the facilities.<sup>358</sup>

As China's economic interests and resource demands increased, China adapted its foreign policy objectives to protect its seaborne trade and complement its expansion.<sup>359</sup> China opened its economy to reforms in 1978, roughly 15 years ahead of India, which gave China's economy a significant head start on globalization<sup>360</sup> and led them to achieving the

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<sup>354</sup> Derek Watkins, "What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea," *New York Times*, 27 October 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea.html>.

<sup>355</sup> Wade Shepard, "Beijing to the World: Don't Call the Belt and Road Initiative OBOR," *Forbes*, 1 August 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2017/08/01/beijing-to-the-world-please-stop-saying-obor/#144fac0e17d4>.

<sup>356</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 88, no. 2 (March/April 2009): 22, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699491>.

<sup>357</sup> Michael J. Green, "China's Maritime Silk Road: Strategic and Economic Implications for the Indo-Pacific Region," *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*, 4 April 2018, <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-maritime-silk-road-implications/>.

<sup>358</sup> Yigal Chazan, "Pakistan's Risky Reliance on China Set to Grow," *The Diplomat*, March 26, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/pakistans-risky-reliance-on-china-set-to-grow/>.

<sup>359</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, "China Views India's Rise: Deepening Cooperation, Managing Differences," 69.

<sup>360</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 2.

second largest economy in the world by 2010.<sup>361</sup> As of 2017, China's economy had grown five times larger than India's<sup>362</sup> with strong economic linkages to countries at both the regional and global level.<sup>363</sup> China's explosive rise, sustained growth rates, and "focus on heavy industry and government-supported investments" have rapidly increased its demand for energy resources.<sup>364</sup>

China suffers from a significant strategic weakness, however: its economy is heavily dependent on a singular sea route, the "Malacca Straits," which connects the South China Sea into the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>365</sup> Adding to China's vulnerability, the United States has long been the primary guarantor of maritime security along the Malacca Strait. China's vulnerability here is known as its "Malacca Dilemma."<sup>366</sup> In 2003, China's President Hu Jintao commented on the dilemma by saying "that certain powers [the United States] have all along encroached on and tried to control navigation through the strait."<sup>367</sup> In his 2012 retirement speech, one of Hu's lasting messages to the party was to become a maritime power capable of "exploiting maritime resources, absolutely safeguard China's maritime rights and interests."<sup>368</sup>

In the first phase of an apparent effort to alleviate vulnerabilities associated with the Malacca Dilemma, China incrementally asserted control of maritime territory in the

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<sup>361</sup> Rahul Roy-Chaudury, "India's Perspective Toward China in their Shared South Asian Neighborhood: Cooperation Versus Competition," *Contemporary Politics*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2018): 98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1408173>.

<sup>362</sup> Roy-Chaudury, 98.

<sup>363</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, "China Views India's Rise: Deepening Cooperation, Managing Differences," in *Strategic Asia 2011–2012: Asia Responds to Its Rising Powers- China and India*, edited by Ashley J. Tellis (Washington, DC: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2011), 70–71.

<sup>364</sup> Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthen America's Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 49.

<sup>365</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," 21–22.

<sup>366</sup> Chengxin Pan, "The 'Indo-Pacific' and Geopolitical Anxieties About China's Rise in the Asian Regional Order," *Australian Journal of international Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 4 (31 March 2014): 462–463.

<sup>367</sup> Marc Lanteigne, "China's Maritime Security and the 'Malacca Dilemma,'" *Asian Security*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2008), 144, <http://doi.org/10.1080/14799850802006555>.

<sup>368</sup> Katherine Morton, "China's Ambitions in the South China Sea," *International Affairs*, vol. 92, no. 4 (2016), 932.



South China Sea that falls within what they call the “Nine-Dash Line.”<sup>369</sup> China’s Nine-Dash Line claims 90 percent of the South China Sea based on contested historical rights that date back 2,000 years, much like their claim to Tibet.<sup>370</sup> As seen in Figure 6, China’s Nine-Dash Line is clearly outside of what would likely be interpreted as sovereign territory or part of its Exclusive Economic Zone by the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).<sup>371</sup> China’s claim stretches from Hainan Island 1200 miles south into areas that form the Exclusive Economic Zones for Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.<sup>372</sup> In 2009, China submitted a letter to the Secretary General of the UN that showed the Nine-Dashed Line and claimed that “China has indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and adjacent waters, and enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the relevant waters as well as the seabed and subsoil.”<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Oriana Skylar Mastro, “Why Chinese Assertiveness is Here to Stay,” *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.37, no. 4 (21 January 2015): 151–170, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0163660X.2014.1002161?needAccess=true>.

<sup>370</sup> Hannah Beech, “Just Where Exactly Did China Get the South China Sea Nine-Dash Line From?” *Time*, 19 July 2016, <http://time.com/4412191/nine-dash-line-9-south-china-sea/>.

<sup>371</sup> Steven Groves and Dean Cheng, “A National Strategy for the South China Sea,” *The Heritage Foundation*, April 24, 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/national-strategy-the-south-china-sea>.

<sup>372</sup> Derek Watkins, “What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea.”

<sup>373</sup> Permanent Mission of the Peoples’ Republic of China, *Notes Verbales CML/17/2009 and CML/18/2009* (New York: United Nations, 7 May 2009), [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs\\_new/submissions\\_files/mysvnm33\\_09/chn\\_2009re\\_mys\\_vnm\\_e.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/mysvnm33_09/chn_2009re_mys_vnm_e.pdf)

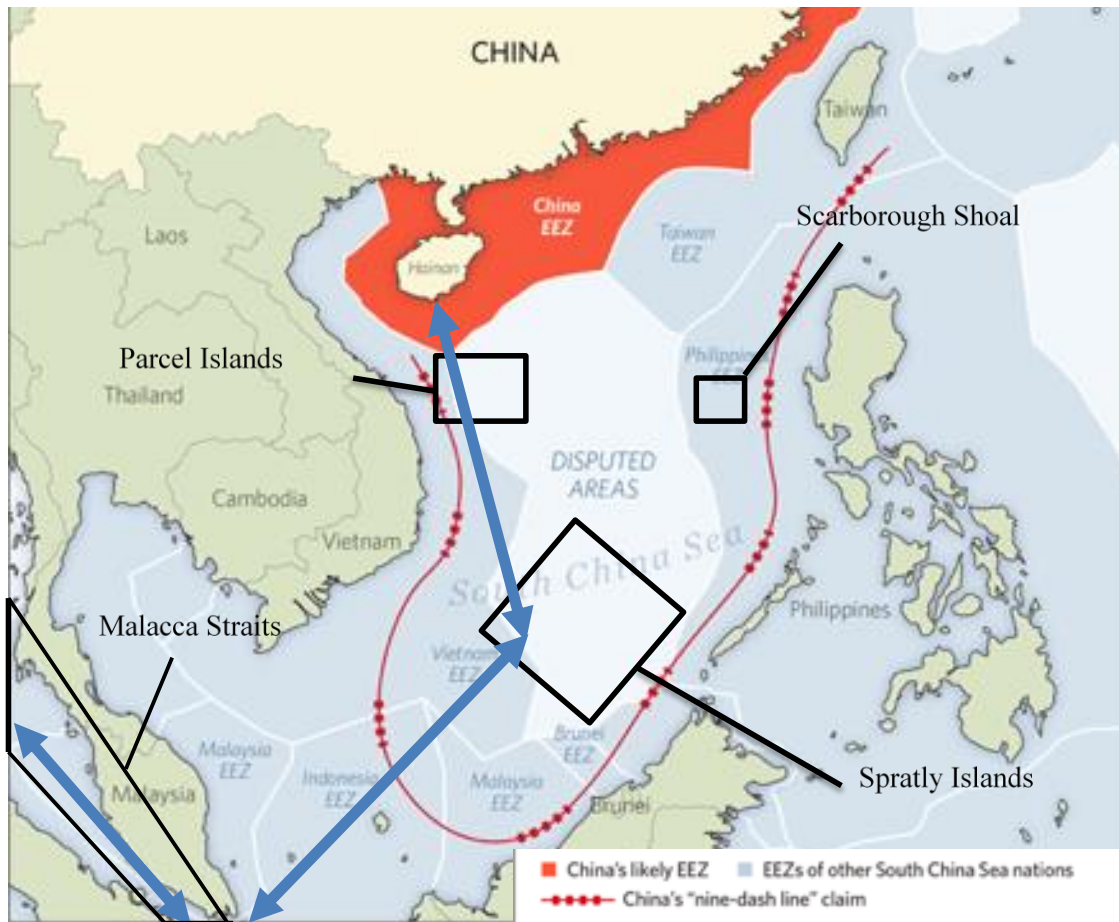


Figure 6. China's "Nine Dash Line" Versus UNCLOS Interpretation<sup>374</sup>

Much like China agreed to nuclear non-proliferation and then proliferated anyway, its increasingly aggressive behavior in the South China Sea does not match its signing of UNCLOS. In April 2001, a U.S. EP-3 plane conducting a regular patrol over international waters 70 miles south of Hainan Island was forced to make an emergency landing after colliding with a PLAN Air Force fighter jet that was attempting to intercept them.<sup>375</sup> The PRC held the jet's crew of 24 U.S. service members as prisoners for almost two weeks.<sup>376</sup>

<sup>374</sup> Adapted from Steven Groves and Dean Cheng, "A National Strategy for the South China Sea," *The Heritage Foundation*, April 24, 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/national-strategy-the-south-china-sea>.

<sup>375</sup> Susan L. Shirk, *China Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 234–235.

<sup>376</sup> Susan L. Shirk, 234–235.

In its action, China challenged international law concerning aviation and law of the sea that permit overflight and access in areas that are beyond 12 miles from a nation's coast and also claimed a much larger piece of territory than what was recognized by the international community.<sup>377</sup> In 2002, China's naval vessels harassed the *USS Bowditch*, while it was conducting legal oceanographic surveys within China's 200 nautical economic zone.<sup>378</sup> In 2009, five Chinese vessels closely and aggressively followed the *USS Impeccable*, coming within seven meters of the ship and causing the U.S. crew to conduct emergency procedures.<sup>379</sup> In 2014, one of China's state-owned enterprises moved an oil rig into waters 1000 miles off China's mainland, coming within a mere 17 miles from Vietnam, for the purpose of exploring and drilling for oil.<sup>380</sup>

China's maritime expansion may not have been so concerning by itself, but China also militarized the South China Sea, presenting a *fait accompli* and exposing its intent to use the area as a base from which to control, expand, and launch naval operations into the Indian Ocean Region. With close to 2000 kilometers separating Hainan Island from the Straits of Malacca, China's newly made islands facilitate the operational reach of the PLAN into the straits and beyond to the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>381</sup> In 2014, China constructed bases in the Spratly Islands capable of hosting submarines and "blue-water" naval vessels, revealing China's intentions to utilize the bases to support operations in the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>382</sup> The bases serve as the first link in what has been referred to as the "String of Pearls" that extend into the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>383</sup> By 2017, China successfully installed radar and

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<sup>377</sup> Shirley A. Kan "China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications," *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL 30946 (Washington, DC: 10 October 2001), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30946.pdf>

<sup>378</sup> Erik Eckholm, "China Complains U.S. Navy Violated 200-Mile Zone," *New York Times*, Sept 26, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/26/international/china-complains-us-navy-violated-200mile-zone.html>.

<sup>379</sup> "The U.S. Accuses the Chinese of Harassing Naval Vessel," *New York Times*, March 9, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/09/world/asia/09iht-ship.3.20710715.html>.

<sup>380</sup> Katherine Morton, "China's Ambitions in the South China Sea," 923–924.

<sup>381</sup> Marc Lanteigne, "China's Maritime Security and the 'Malacca Dilemma,'" 148.

<sup>382</sup> Katherine Morton, "China's Ambitions in the South China Sea," 934.

<sup>383</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean," 21–22.

communication systems capable of monitoring maritime traffic entering and exiting the South China Sea.<sup>384</sup> Additionally, China emplaced facilities necessary to support combat aircraft, mobile missile launchers, ammunition storage, and defensive combat systems.<sup>385</sup> China's newly established outposts in the South China Sea give the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) the ability to overcome the "tyranny of distance" and further project naval power into the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>386</sup>

China's initial naval expansion into the Indian Ocean Region, in 2008, did not particularly challenge India because the PLAN deployed to the Gulf of Aden to conduct anti-piracy operations.<sup>387</sup> This was in compliance with UN Resolution 1816, which justified China's efforts to protect its commercial interests and "repress piracy and armed robbery at sea."<sup>388</sup> Since 2009, however, the People's Liberation Army Navy has maintained an enduring presence in the Indian Ocean Region by rotating task forces every four months.<sup>389</sup> During its transits from the South China Sea through the Indian Ocean Region, the People's Liberation Army Navy routinely conducts port calls throughout the region and concurrently collects information that likely facilitate its future naval operations to include both submarine and anti-submarine operations.<sup>390</sup> By 2013, India learned of Chinese submarine presence from the United States<sup>391</sup> and from one docking in Sri Lanka's Hambantota.<sup>392</sup> As of 2015, China's naval modernization efforts include increasing its submarine total to 56 while

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<sup>384</sup> Maritime Transparency Initiative, "Updated: China's Big Three Near Completion," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 29 June 2017, <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-big-three-near-completion/>.

<sup>385</sup> Maritime Transparency Initiative.

<sup>386</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 754.

<sup>387</sup> Garver, 753.

<sup>388</sup> Clive Schofield and Robin Warner, "Horn of Troubles: Understanding and Addressing the Somali 'Piracy' Phenomenon," in *Deep Currents and Rising Tides: The Indian Ocean and International Security*, edited by John Garofano and Andrea J. Dew (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 58–59.

<sup>389</sup> Garver, *China's Quest*, 753.

<sup>390</sup> Garver, 753.

<sup>391</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century*, 154.

<sup>392</sup> Jonathan Hillman, "Game of Loans: How China Bought Hambantota," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (April 2, 2018), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/game-loans-how-china-bought-hambantota>.

simultaneously developing “blue water” naval vessels capable of operating in the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>393</sup> By 2017, China opened its first overseas base in Djibouti, labeling it as a “logistics facility.”<sup>394</sup> In very short order, therefore, China’s expansionist presence in the Indian Ocean Region appeared permanent and, therefore, challenging to India.

Simultaneous with an increased People’s Liberation Army Navy presence, China’s economic and geostrategic expansion threatens India on several levels. China launched the Belt and Road Initiative, first articulated in 2013, to “streamline foreign trade, ensure stable energy supplies, promote Asian infrastructure development, and consolidate Beijing’s regional influence.”<sup>395</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative capitalized on China’s earlier efforts to create transportation links to Central, Southwest, and South Asia.<sup>396</sup> The “belt” refers to the land routes that connect China to Eurasia while the road, or Maritime Silk Road, refers to the maritime routes that connect China to a series of ports neighboring India.<sup>397</sup> The project serves China’s economic and geostrategic interests as it diversifies trade flows and expands China’s influence around India’s periphery.<sup>398</sup> At an initial investment of 62 billion USD, China initiated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to develop infrastructure that connects China’s western sector to the Indian Ocean at the Gwadar Port in Balochistan, Pakistan.<sup>399</sup> Parts of the corridor run directly through Pakistan-administered Kashmir,<sup>400</sup> which is

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<sup>393</sup> Katherine Morton, “China’s Ambitions in the South China Sea,” 933–934.

<sup>394</sup> “China Formally Opens First Overseas Military Base in Djibouti,” *Reuters World News*, August 1, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-djibouti/china-formally-opens-first-overseas-military-base-in-djibouti-idUSKBN1AH3E3>.

<sup>395</sup> James McBride, “Building the New Silk Road,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 22 May 2015, <https://www.cfr.org/background/bldg-new-silk-road>.

<sup>396</sup> Garver, “Development of China’s Overland Transportation Links with Central, Southwest, and South Asia,” *China Quarterly*, no. 185 (March 2006), 1–22, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20192573>.

<sup>397</sup> James McBride, “Building the New Silk Road.”

<sup>398</sup> Kadira Pethiyagoda, “What’s driving China’s New Silk Road, and should the West respond?” *Brookings*, 17 May 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/05/17/whats-driving-chinas-new-silk-road-and-how-should-the-west-respond/>

<sup>399</sup> Gurmeet Kanwal, “Pakistan’s Gwadar Port: A New Naval Base in China’s String of Pearls in the Indo-Pacific,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (April 2, 2018), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/pakistans-gwadar-port-new-naval-base-chinas-string-pearls-indo-pacific>.

<sup>400</sup> Ashishek Chakraborty, “In Corridor Planned with Pak Through PoK, China Calls India ‘Third Party’” *NDTV* (December 28, 2017), <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/in-corridor-planned-with-pak-through-pok-china-calls-india-an-outsider-1792936>.



disputed territory with India and further complicates India's ability to resolve regional border disputes.<sup>401</sup> Furthermore, the Gwadar Port's location in the western portion of the Indian Ocean Region positions the People's Liberation Army Navy to control the Straits of Hormuz in case of any conflict with India.<sup>402</sup> In the case of any conflict between the two states, China's control of India's periphery through the ports and sea lines could seriously threaten India's economic and strategic interests as shown in Figure 7.

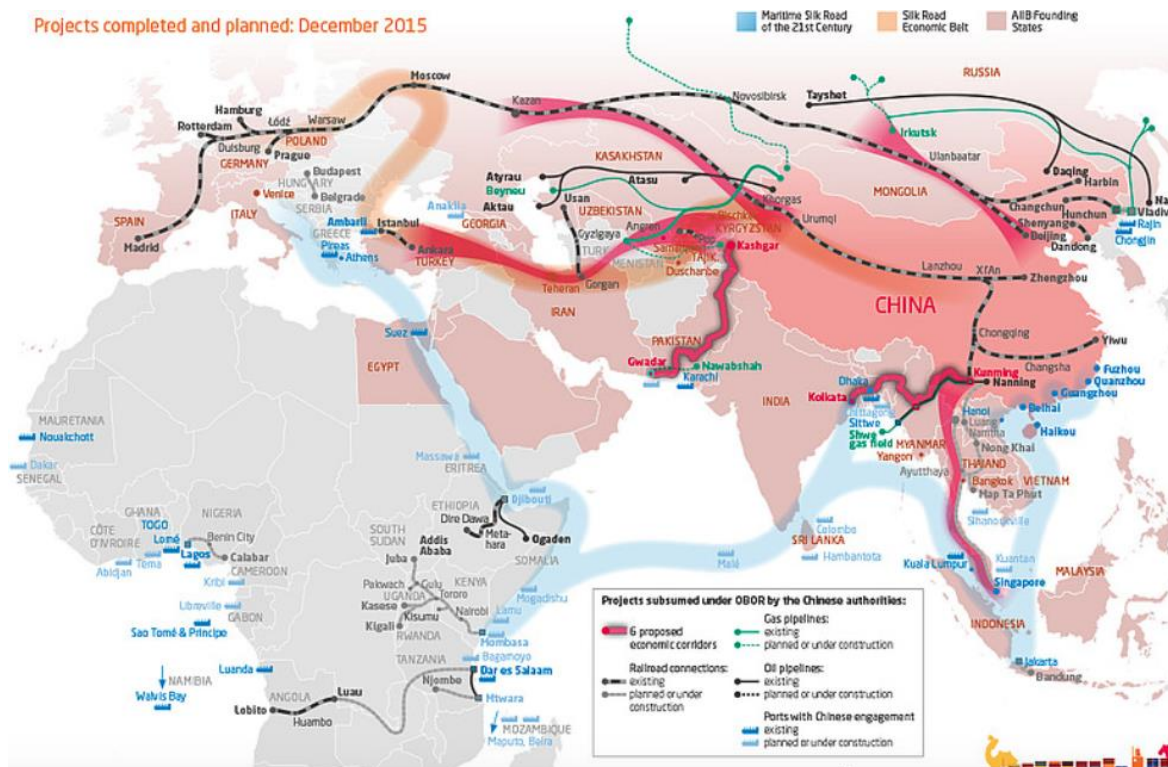


Figure 7. China's Belt and Road Projects Planned and Completed December 2015.<sup>403</sup>

<sup>401</sup> Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's Gwadar Port: A New Naval Base in China's String of Pearls in the Indo-Pacific."

<sup>402</sup> Harsh V. Pant and Ritika Passi, "India's Response to China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Policy in Motion," *Asia Policy*, no. 24 (July 27): 93, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2017.0025>.

<sup>403</sup> Adapted from "One Belt, One Road: With the Silk Road Initiative, China Aims to Build a Global Infrastructure Network," *Mercator Institute for China Studies*, accessed 1 May 2018, <https://www.merics.org/en/blog/how-belt-and-road-initiative-globalizes-chinas-national-security-policy>.

In addition to Gwadar Port, China has completed a port in Sri Lanka and won contracts to build a deep-sea port in one of Myanmar's coastal towns on the Bay of Bengal.<sup>404</sup> The ports could be utilized to accommodate the People's Liberation Army Navy's ability to operate in the Bay of Bengal and increase operational reach into the "far seas" of the Indian Ocean.<sup>405</sup> On the surface, these projects create tremendous economic opportunities for the recipient countries. However, the infrastructure projects are levied with high-interest loans that have proven difficult for the recipient countries to pay back.<sup>406</sup> After failing to repay loans on the Hambantota Port, Sri Lanka agreed to "give China a controlling equity stake in the port and a 99-year lease for operating it."<sup>407</sup> By leveraging both the port finances and locations, China's expansionist challenge has extended to isolate India while creating redundancies to protect itself. Thus, if China chose to engage in conflict, the international community would have much less coercive leverage. Without firing a round and under the guise of "peaceful development,"<sup>408</sup> China now controls ports near India, and, with China pursuing similar strategies across the Indian Ocean Region, India now faces the possibility of a China-dominated region.

## **B. INDIA'S RESPONSE: FURTHER BALANCING**

India has pursued both internal and external strategies to balance against China's expansionist behavior.

India's internal balancing behaviors include increasing military spending and adopting a military strategy more capable of competing with China in the Indian Ocean

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<sup>404</sup> Michael J. Green, "China's Maritime Silk Road: Strategic and Economic Implications for the Indo-Pacific Region," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-maritime-silk-road-implications/>.

<sup>405</sup> Gurpeet S. Khurana, "China's String of Pearls in the Indian Ocean and Its Security Implications," 1–11.

<sup>406</sup> Jeff M. Smith, "China and Sri Lanka: Between a Dream and a Nightmare," *The Diplomat*, November 18, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/china-and-sri-lanka-between-a-dream-and-a-nightmare/>.

<sup>407</sup> Jonathan Hillman, "Game of Loans: How China Bought Hambantota," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, April 2, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/game-loans-how-china-bought-hambantota>.

<sup>408</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, "China Views India's Rise: Deepening Cooperation, Managing Differences," 69.

Region. India has had to overcome a continental strategic mindset to adapt to the rapidly emerging maritime threat posed by the People's Liberation Army Navy in the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>409</sup> Since independence, the Indian Army has received the largest share of the defense budget to protect India's unsettled borders which span over 2,400 miles.<sup>410</sup> After multiple border wars with Pakistan and the 1962 Sino-Indian War, India invested heavily on the Army to address continental threats.<sup>411</sup> Furthermore, in each of India's "twentieth-century conflicts," the Indian Army and, to a lesser extent, the Air Force played more important roles than the Navy,<sup>412</sup> leaving India's sailors to be treated as a "Cinderella service."<sup>413</sup> As India's maritime interests grew, its political leaders recognized the value of a navy and the requirement for a maritime strategy.<sup>414</sup>

India's 2007 Maritime Military Strategy emphasized the South China Sea as an area of interest and began to highlight the coming challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>415</sup> In 2009, former Foreign Secretary of India, Shiv Shankar Menon, commented that India's "maritime policies will be one of the major determinants of success or failure in our attempt to transform India into a modern, plural, open, advanced country that is both secure and prosperous."<sup>416</sup> In 2012, Admiral D. K. Joshi, Chief of the Indian Navy, announced that the Indian Navy "will be required to be there [South China Sea] and we are prepared for that."<sup>417</sup> From 2012 to 2013, India increased the Navy's allocation of the defense budget

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<sup>409</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 57.

<sup>410</sup> Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study*, 49–55.

<sup>411</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 161–162.

<sup>412</sup> Smith.

<sup>413</sup> C. Raja Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), 57.

<sup>414</sup> Smith, *Cold Peace*, 161–162.

<sup>415</sup> Chengxin Pan, "The 'Indo-Pacific' and Geopolitical Anxieties About China's Rise in the Asian Regional Order," *Australian Journal of international Affairs*, Vol. 68, Issue 4 (31 March 2014): 458–459.

<sup>416</sup> Shiv Shankar Menon, "Maritime Imperatives of Indian Foreign Policy," *Maritime Affaris: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2010), 15–16, DOI: 10.1080/09733150903429460

<sup>417</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "Understanding India's Interest in the South China Sea: Getting into the Seaweeds," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (December 18, 2012), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-india-s-interest-south-china-sea-getting-seaweeds>.



by 74 percent from \$2.74 billion to \$4.77 billion.<sup>418</sup> By 2016, India had increased annual defense spending by 10 percent for three straight years, becoming the world's fifth highest defense spender.<sup>419</sup> India has used its increased military spending to acquire blue-water navy capabilities that demonstrate its desire to compete against China in the broader Indian Ocean Region.<sup>420</sup>

India, clearly balancing against China and recognizing its geographical advantage in the Indian Ocean, has continued to prioritize the maritime domain. India moved over thirty percent of its naval fleet from the Western Naval Command, which is Pakistan-focused, to the Eastern Naval Command, which is predominantly China-focused.<sup>421</sup> India also placed military assets on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are situated at the northwest mouth of the Straits of Malacca and the Bay of Bengal.<sup>422</sup> The island chain is composed of hundreds of islands that stretch over 500 miles from north to south, an area that sees the majority of container traffic passing from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean Region.<sup>423</sup> In 2001, India established the Andaman and Nicobar Command, which is commanded by a three star general and hosts Army, Navy, and Coast Guard assets.<sup>424</sup> Given its strategic location, India is positioned to utilize assets on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to conduct surveillance on China's naval activities as they transit in the Bay of Bengal. In the case of a Sino-Indian crisis, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could be utilized to control the SLOCs and severely disrupt China's maritime trade and energy

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<sup>418</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 238.

<sup>419</sup> Rezaul H Laskar, "India is Fifth Largest Military Spender with Outlay of 55.9 Billion: SIPRI," *Hindustan Times* (April 24, 2017), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/india-is-fifth-largest-military-spender-with-outlay-of-55-9-bn-sipri/story-bOH1JVFUcnOxKH3XTdncSM.html>

<sup>420</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia*, 57.

<sup>421</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 238.

<sup>422</sup> Smith, 164–166.

<sup>423</sup> Smith.

<sup>424</sup> Darshana M. Baruah, "The Andaman and Nicobar Islands: India's Eastern Anchor in a Changing Indo-Pacific," *War on the Rocks* (March 21, 2018), <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/the-andaman-and-nicobar-islands-indias-eastern-anchor-in-a-changing-indo-pacific/>

resources.<sup>425</sup> As of 2017, India has allocated resources to expand airfield infrastructure to enable a wider range of military capabilities to operate from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.<sup>426</sup>

India has also engaged in external balancing strategies with China's major rivals, especially the United States. India's relationship with the United States has grown exponentially since 2005 when India and the United States signed a civil nuclear agreement.<sup>427</sup> Over the next ten years, India and the United States codified strategic cooperation, signing the U.S.–India Defense Relationship agreement<sup>428</sup> and establishing the Defense Technology Trade Initiative—to streamline the exchange of military technologies.<sup>429</sup> In 2015, India and the United States concluded the Joint Strategic Vision which reinforces the importance of U.S.–Indian ties and focused on maritime security.<sup>430</sup> In 2016, India and the United States agreed to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, which streamlines logistics arrangements between the two countries.<sup>431</sup> In 2016, India became a “Major Defense Partner” of the United States, which puts India on par with key U.S. allies and partners.<sup>432</sup> Since the mid-2000s, India has conducted more exercises with the United States than any other country.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Samir Saran, “How India and the U.S. Can Lead in the Indo-Pacific,” *Observer Research Foundation* (18 August 2017), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/how-india-us-can-lead-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>426</sup> Shishir Gupta, “More Muscle for India's Andaman and Nicobar Defence Posts to Counter Hawkish China,” *Hindustan Times* (May 9, 2018), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/more-muscle-for-india-s-andaman-and-nicobar-defence-posts-to-counter-hawkish-china/story-8YkEo28c3WZM9Lqq2iiJnK.html>

<sup>427</sup> Kathleen H. Hicks, “U.S.–India Security Cooperation: Progress and Promise for the Next Administration,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 2.

<sup>428</sup> Department of Defense, “Enhancing Defense and Security Cooperation with India.”

<sup>429</sup> Department of Defense.

<sup>430</sup> Department of Defense.

<sup>431</sup> Department of Defense.

<sup>432</sup> Department of Defense.

<sup>433</sup> Chengxin Pan, “The ‘Indo-Pacific’ and Geopolitical Anxieties About China's Rise in the Asian Regional Order,” *Australian Journal of international Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 4 (31 March 2014): 458–459.

Since 2005, India has also improved security relations with Japan, which shares a territorial dispute with China. In 2007, Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, initiated the concept of a "broader Asia" to the Indian Parliament,<sup>434</sup> which suggested that India and Japan had a shared interest in preserving "seas of freedom and prosperity" that link the Indian Ocean Region with the rest of the Asia-Pacific.<sup>435</sup> In 2008, India and Japan issued "the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India," which constructed a framework for increasing defense cooperation with an emphasis on the maritime domain.<sup>436</sup> By 2014, India and Japan signed the "Agreement Concerning the Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Information," which is also referred to as a general security of military information agreement.<sup>437</sup> The general security of military information agreement indicates a strong commitment to share classified military information between the Indian Armed Forces and the Japan Self Defense Force.<sup>438</sup> Additionally, Japan and India signed agreements concerning the transfer of defense equipment and technology.

India has also pursued robust multilateral security cooperation with regional key players in what became known as the Quadrilateral Initiative," or the "Quad" to balance against China.<sup>439</sup> In 2007 and after India signed a defense agreement with Australia, the Quad plus Singapore conducted the 9<sup>th</sup> iteration of the Malabar exercise,<sup>440</sup> which included twenty-five naval vessels, ultimately infuriating China.<sup>441</sup> After an eight-year hiatus, the Quad has been collectively reinvigorated in response to China's assertive and expansionist

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<sup>434</sup> Pan, 461.

<sup>435</sup> Rupakjyoti Borah, "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Crucial to Japan's Continued Economic Success," *Japan Forward*, December 15, 2017, <https://japan-forward.com/free-and-open-indo-pacific-crucial-to-japans-continued-economic-success/>.

<sup>436</sup> Yuki Tatsumi, "Abe Visit Takes Japan-India Security Relations to the Next Level," *The Diplomat*, December 14, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/abes-visit-takes-japan-india-security-relations-to-the-next-level/>.

<sup>437</sup> Tatsumi.

<sup>438</sup> Tatsumi.

<sup>439</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century*, 152.

<sup>440</sup> For a chronological record of the Malabar, see Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century*, 184–185.

<sup>441</sup> Smith, 183.

behavior. In 2015, India demonstrated a true desire to develop interoperability with Japan and the United States, hosting anti-submarine warfare training in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>442</sup> In 2017, at the Malabar Exercise, India, the United States, and Japan each deployed an aircraft carrier into the Indian Ocean Region to conduct interoperability training, sending a strong signal to China of the growing defense cooperation.<sup>443</sup>

India has also countered China's expansion by consolidating and growing a relationship with Vietnam,<sup>444</sup> which disputes China's South China Sea claims.<sup>445</sup> In efforts to "Look East," India declared a strategic partnership with Vietnam in 2007 that recognized the importance of strengthening "defense supplies, joint projects, training cooperation and intelligence exchanges."<sup>446</sup> In early 2014, China attempted to extract oil in territory that Vietnam claims as within its Exclusive Economic Zone.<sup>447</sup> India responded by signing agreements to transfer "offshore patrol vessels" and 100 million USD credit to Vietnam, which, according to India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, "will enable Vietnam to acquire new naval vessels from India."<sup>448</sup> Since 2014, despite China's objections,<sup>449</sup> subsidiaries of India's state-run energy companies have conducted joint oil exploration with Petro Vietnam Exploration Production Corporation in the South China

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<sup>442</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "Military Drills in Indian Ocean Signaling Deepening Ties," *Wall Street Journal*, October 19, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/military-drills-in-indian-ocean-signal-deepening-ties-1445191451>.

<sup>443</sup> C Uday Bhakshar, "Will China Sign Up to the Narendra Modi's SAGAR Vision," *Institute of Asia & Pacific Studies* (December 18, 2017): 2–3, <https://iapsdialogue.org/2017/12/18/will-china-sign-up-to-narendra-modis-sagar-vision>.

<sup>444</sup> Harsh V. Pant, A "Strategic-Partnership" in the Making," *Rajaratnam School of International Studies* (Singapore: RSIS, April, 2018), <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PB180409 - India-and-Vietnam.pdf>.

<sup>445</sup> Rishi Iyengar, "Risking China's Ire, India Signs Defense and Oil Deals with Vietnam," *Time* (October 29, 2014), <http://time.com/3545383/risking-chinas-ire-india-signs-defense-and-oil-deals-with-vietnam/>.

<sup>446</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 103.

<sup>447</sup> Sanjeev Miglani, "India to Supply Vietnam with Naval Vessels Amid China Disputes," *Reuters*, October 28, 2014, <https://in.reuters.com/article/india-vietnam/india-to-supply-vietnam-with-naval-vessels-amid-china-disputes-idINKBN0IH0L020141028>.

<sup>448</sup> Miglani.

<sup>449</sup> "India, Vietnam sign exploration pacts," *Business Standard*, 29 October 2014, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/ongc-and-vietnam-s-pvpep-sign-pacts-for-oil-exploration-in-offshore-vietnam-114102800955\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/ongc-and-vietnam-s-pvpep-sign-pacts-for-oil-exploration-in-offshore-vietnam-114102800955_1.html)

Sea.<sup>450</sup> By increasing relations with Vietnam, India both competed with China and demonstrated the willingness and ability to bring balancing actions into China's direct periphery.

India has also responded competitively to China's efforts to gain influence with some of the smaller but strategically located countries in the Indian Ocean Region by "looking south."<sup>451</sup> In 2009, Hu Jintao visited Mauritius and Seychelles, two of the smallest but strategically important countries in the Indian Ocean Region, prompting India to form closer defense relationships with each.<sup>452</sup> In 2011, India set up eight coastal surveillance radar systems in Mauritius with an agreement to "strengthen cooperation to enhance security in the Indian Ocean region through jointly agreed programs of Exclusive Economic Zone surveillance, exchange of information, capacity building."<sup>453</sup> After learning of China's desires to establish a base in the Maldives in 2006, India responded by increasing security assistance and defense cooperation.<sup>454</sup> In 2011, India entered into a defense partnership with the Maldives that closely resembled defense treaty promising to conduct "coordinated patrolling and aerial surveillance, exchange of information, development of effective legal framework and other measures mutually agreed upon."<sup>455</sup> India continues to demonstrate a propensity to balance every time China attempts to subvert India's influence in the Indian Ocean Region.

Although slow at first, India is increasingly competing with China's Belt and Road Initiative by adopting its own economic and geopolitical initiatives. In response to China's Gwadar Port in Pakistan, India initiated a port development project 72 kilometers to the

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<sup>450</sup> Ralph Jennings, "Vietnam is Chasing India to Escape the Grip of China," *Forbes*, 10 July 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ralphjennings/2017/07/10/vietnam-is-chasing-india-in-a-new-gambit-to-resist-china/#26b157ba5f59>.

<sup>451</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 144-146.

<sup>452</sup> Mohan, 140-141.

<sup>453</sup> Mohan, 140-141.

<sup>454</sup> Sudha Ramachandran, "Maldives: Tiny Islands, Big Intrigue," *Asia Times Online*, April 7, 2006, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/HD07Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/HD07Df01.html).

<sup>455</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 145.

west in Chabahar, Iran.<sup>456</sup> The project attempts to create a transportation corridor that could eventually connect India to supply chains that run across China's Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>457</sup> Responding to being "surrounded" by China, India is working with Japan to connect to Southeast Asia through "land-bridge" projects through Myanmar in direct competition with China's Belt and Road Initiative projects.<sup>458</sup> On the other side of the Indian Ocean Region, India and Japan presented a "vision document" for an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor to national leaders in Africa, which offers a the narrative of "free and open Indo-Pacific" opposed to the China-central Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>459</sup> India is competing around its periphery, including in joint ventures with China's rivals, to challenge the Belt and Road Initiative.

India's leaders have been publicly critical of China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea and expansion efforts in the Indian Ocean Region, which further highlights India's commitment to balancing. In 2011, and in despite of objections from China, India voiced concerns about issues in the South China Sea and urged China to conform to international laws concerning the resolution of territorial disputes in the maritime domain.<sup>460</sup> After China rebuked the findings of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 which undermined some of China's claims in the South China Sea,<sup>461</sup> India issued a

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<sup>456</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "India-Iran Cooperation at Chabahar Port: Choppy Waters," *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (March 2018): 1–4, [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180330\\_Pant\\_IndiaIranCooperation.pdf?fqPmZAGpoM4j2M021iUi0j718YiQw0b](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180330_Pant_IndiaIranCooperation.pdf?fqPmZAGpoM4j2M021iUi0j718YiQw0b).

<sup>457</sup> Pant, 3.

<sup>458</sup> Sudha Ramachandran, "The Trouble With India's Projects in Myanmar," *The Diplomat* (September 21, 2016), <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/the-trouble-with-indias-projects-in-myanmar/>.

<sup>459</sup> Avinash Nair, "To Counter OBOR, India and Japan Propose Asia-Africa Sea Corridor," *The Indian Express*, May 31, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/to-counter-obor-india-and-japan-propose-asia-africa-sea-corridor-4681749/>.

<sup>460</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 183.

<sup>461</sup> Darshana Baruah, South China Sea Ruling: India Takes a Stand," *The Lowy Institute* (15 July 2016), <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/south-china-sea-ruling-india-takes-stand>.

statement urging Beijing to “show respect for the UNCLOS, which establishes the international legal order of the seas and oceans.”<sup>462</sup>

India’s leaders are also publicly on record as being highly critical and skeptical of China’s intentions with the Belt and Road Initiative. During a 2016 speech to the U.S. Congress, India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi very skillfully alluded to China’s behavior, implying that the absence of an agreed security architecture was creating uncertainty.<sup>463</sup> In January of 2017, Modi addressed China’s Belt and Road Initiative, suggesting that the only way to avoid difference and discord was by “respecting the sovereignty of countries involved.”<sup>464</sup> India very publicly declined to attend China’s key-mark 14 May 2017 summit and, instead, took the opportunity to question the efficacy of the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>465</sup> In a formal statement released on the day prior to the summit, India explained its decision to not attend by citing objections to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.<sup>466</sup> India’s statement suggested that the Belt and Road Initiative was inconsistent with “recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency, and equality.”<sup>467</sup> Also in 2017, India’s Foreign Secretary Jaishankar highlighted China’s duplicitous behavior, saying “China is very sensitive about its

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<sup>462</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Statement on Award of Arbitral Tribunal on South China Sea Under Annexure VII of UNCLOS,” *Government of India* (12 July 2016), [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27019/Statement\\_on\\_Award\\_of\\_Arbitral\\_Tribunal\\_on\\_South\\_China\\_Sea\\_Under\\_Annexure\\_VII\\_of UNCLOS](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27019/Statement_on_Award_of_Arbitral_Tribunal_on_South_China_Sea_Under_Annexure_VII_of UNCLOS).

<sup>463</sup> Narendra Modi, “Text of the Prime Minister’s Address to the Joint Session of U.S. Congress,” *The Hindu*, November 29, 2016, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/resources/text-of-the-prime-ministers-address-to-the-joint-session-of-U.S.-Congress/article14391856.ece>.

<sup>464</sup> Narendra Modi, “Inaugural Address at Second Raisina Dialogue,” *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India* (January 2017), [http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27948/Inaugural\\_Address\\_by\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_at\\_Second\\_Raisina\\_Dialogue\\_New\\_Delhi\\_January\\_17\\_2017](http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/27948/Inaugural_Address_by_Prime_Minister_at_Second_Raisina_Dialogue_New_Delhi_January_17_2017)

<sup>465</sup> Kadira Pethiyagoda, “What’s driving China’s New Silk Road, and should the West respond?” *Brookings*, 17 May 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/05/17/whats-driving-chinas-new-silk-road-and-how-should-the-west-respond/>

<sup>466</sup> Alyssa Ayres, “India Objects to China’s One Belt and Road initiative and It Has A Point,” *Forbes* (May 15, 2017), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alyssaayres/2017/05/15/india-objects-to-chinas-one-belt-and-road-initiative-and-it-has-a-point/#65afaae7b262>.

<sup>467</sup> “Official Spokesperson’s Response to a Query on Participation of India in OBOR/Belt and Road Initiative Forum,” *Government of India Ministry of External Affairs* (13 May 2017), [http://mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/28463/Official\\_Spokespersons\\_response\\_to\\_a\\_query\\_on\\_participation\\_of\\_India\\_in\\_OBORBelt\\_and\\_Road\\_Initiative\\_Forum](http://mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/28463/Official_Spokespersons_response_to_a_query_on_participation_of_India_in_OBORBelt_and_Road_Initiative_Forum).



sovereignty. The economic corridor [China Pakistan Economic Corridor] passes through an illegal territory, an area that we call Pak-occupied Kashmir. You can imagine India's reaction at the fact that such a project has been initiated without consulting us."<sup>468</sup> On 5 April 2018, India's External Affairs Ministry expressed that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor ignores India's "concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity."<sup>469</sup> Then, Modi issued a Joint Statement with President Donald Trump vocalizing concern about China's Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>470</sup> Furthermore, Modi has sent diplomatic signals that suggest India has ambitions to challenge China as a leader in Asia.<sup>471</sup> In 2015, Modi sent a letter to India's diplomats posted abroad urging them to "help India position itself in a leading role, rather than just a balancing force."<sup>472</sup>

In response to China's assertive behavior, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that India has competed and, internally and externally, embraced strategic balancing against China's expansionist rise.

### **C. CHINA AGAIN PUSHES INDIA OVER FUNDAMENTAL BORDER DISPUTE**

In addition to building in the South China Sea and expanding into the Indian Ocean Region, China has continued to press its position in disputed territories in the Himalayas which have served as a historical buffer between China and India.<sup>473</sup> As shown in Chapter

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<sup>468</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "India Challenges China's Intentions on One Belt, One Road Initiative," *YaleGlobal Online*, June 22, 2017, <https://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/india-challenges-chinas-intentions-one-belt-one-road-initiative>.

<sup>469</sup> Kiran Sharma, "New Delhi Wary of Beijing's India-Nepal-China Corridor Plan," *Nikkei Asian Review*, April 20, 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-Relations/New-Delhi-wary-of-Beijing-s-India-Nepal-China-corridor-plan>.

<sup>470</sup> Richard M. Rossow, "For the United States, India's Moves at Doklam Signal Its Willingness to Act," *The Diplomat*, August 17, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/for-the-united-states-indias-moves-at-doklam-signal-its-willingness-to-act/>.

<sup>471</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, *India as a Leading Power* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2016), 3–5, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/04/04/india-as-leading-power-pub-63185>.

<sup>472</sup> Narendra Modi, "PM to Heads of Indian Missions," *Press Information Bureau Government of India Prime Minister's Office* (New Delhi, India: Government of India, February 7, 2015), <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=115241>.

<sup>473</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 167–186



II, India and China have a long-standing border dispute, which spans over 2,400 miles and continues to serve as a potential trigger for a larger war.<sup>474</sup> Recently, China has attempted to assert its claims in Bhutan, a country with 800,000 people, in a strategically important and contested area that connects China to the Indian sub-continent.<sup>475</sup> In the summer of 2017 in what may have been a probe, China tested India's commitment to balancing by extending a road through strategically sensitive territory that is currently disputed between China and Bhutan.<sup>476</sup> Despite facing direct threats from China to not interfere, India defiantly balanced by refusing to allow the PLA to alter the status quo.<sup>477</sup>

China is increasingly pressing against the Himalayas by challenging Bhutan's territorial integrity, which in turn challenges India. For China, the northeast region of the Indian sub-continent has grown in strategic value due to enduring issues relating to Tibet<sup>478</sup> and due to the future prospects for an additional transportation link to the Indian Ocean.<sup>479</sup> For over two decades, China has communicated ambitions to develop a trade corridor that would connect Lhasa on the Tibet (China) side of the border through the Chumbi Valley to the Indian port city of Kolkata.<sup>480</sup> China has completed infrastructure projects that connect China to Tibet with plans to connect Tibet to neighboring Nepal and Bhutan.<sup>481</sup> In the case of crisis along the border, China's infrastructure projects, which

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<sup>474</sup> Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study*, 49–55.

<sup>475</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over Remote Mountain Pass," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/dolam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html>.

<sup>476</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over Remote Mountain Pass," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/dolam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html>.

<sup>477</sup> Catherine Wong, "China Will Protect Border With India 'At All Costs,'" *South China Morning Post*, July 24, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2103864/chinas-defence-spokesman-warns-india-not-take-any>.

<sup>478</sup> Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century*, 90–93.

<sup>479</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 115.

<sup>480</sup> Garver, "Development of China's Overland Transportation Links with Central, Southwest, and South Asia," 1–22.

<sup>481</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific*, 113–115.

include high-speed rail, highways, airports, and fiber optic communications, could be utilized to support PLA operations.<sup>482</sup>

China has been trying to degrade India's relationship with Bhutan to expand into disputed territory that has traditionally been protected by India. In the 1950s and 1960s, Bhutan, which shares ethnic and cultural ties to Tibet, turned to India for protection when Tibetan refugees spilled into Bhutan's borders and relayed to the Bhutanese people the brutality of China's occupation of Tibet.<sup>483</sup> Additionally, Bhutan's fears of China were heightened when the PRC published maps that showed large portions of Bhutan as part of China and released statements implying that Bhutan needed to be united with Tibet and "taught the communist doctrine."<sup>484</sup> Bhutan responded by closing relations with China and furthering its relationship with India.<sup>485</sup> Beginning in the early 1960s and lasting until the mid-1980s, China staged several divisions of the PLA on Bhutan's northern borders to pressure Bhutan into clarifying or settling its border disputes with China.<sup>486</sup> After several decades of isolation, Bhutan began to consider a more open relationship with the China. By 1984, India agreed to allow Bhutan to bi-laterally discuss border issues with China.<sup>487</sup> Since that time, China has utilized its access to Bhutan and massive economic growth to try and lure the Bhutanese into establishing a more formal relationship.<sup>488</sup> Simultaneously, the PLA has consistently crossed into Bhutan to seize small pieces of terrain and to establish a pattern of routine patrolling consistent with ownership.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> Anushree Dutta, "China's Infrastructure Development in the Light of Doklam," *Center for Land Warfare Studies* (August 2, 2017), <http://www.claws.in/1780/china's-infrastructure-development-in-the-light-of-doklam-stand-off-anushree-dutta.html>.

<sup>483</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 176–177.

<sup>484</sup> Brian Benedictus, "Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle," *The Diplomat*, August 2, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/08/bhutan-and-the-great-power-tussle/>.

<sup>485</sup> Benedictus.

<sup>486</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 182.

<sup>487</sup> Garver, 182–185.

<sup>488</sup> Brian Benedictus, "Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle."

<sup>489</sup> Benedictus.

Since the 1950s, India has chosen to protect Bhutan from China's expansion. In 1949, India and Bhutan signed a Treaty, which obligated India to defend Bhutan and play a significant role in guiding its foreign policy.<sup>490</sup> Until 1984, India prevented China from having direct contact with Bhutan and demanded that China direct any foreign policy questions concerning issues relating to Bhutan toward New Delhi.<sup>491</sup> Nevertheless, India has respected Bhutan's increased desires for more independence. In 2007, India and Bhutan signed a new treaty that incorporated language binding India and Bhutan to "cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests,"<sup>492</sup> which gave the Bhutanese government more agency to communicate with China.<sup>493</sup> India has responded to China's attempts to gain influence in Bhutan by increasing financial and infrastructure assistance and ensuring strong diplomatic ties.<sup>494</sup> After being elected Prime Minister in 2014, Modi elected to take his first foreign trip to Bhutan to demonstrate the importance of the relationship.<sup>495</sup> Despite China's attempts to isolate Bhutan, India has refused to let China decouple its "special relationship."<sup>496</sup>

India's decision to maintain Bhutan within its sphere of influence is largely due to its geostrategic importance. For India, the value of protecting Bhutan aligns with securing its own geographical vulnerabilities.<sup>497</sup> India's inescapable geographical vulnerability is the Siliguri Corridor, or "Chicken's Neck," which at its narrowest point

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<sup>490</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 167–186.

<sup>491</sup> Garver, 176–177.

<sup>492</sup> "India, Bhutan Sign Friendship Treaty," *Hindustan Times*, accessed 23 May, 2018, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world/india-bhutan-sign-friendship-treaty/story-03O9hJv3DkYDq80J3VseXJ.html>.

<sup>493</sup> Brian Benedictus, "Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle."

<sup>494</sup> Benedictus.

<sup>495</sup> "Modi to First Visit U.S. in September, First Trip to Bhutan," *Reuters*, June 6, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-modi/indias-modi-to-visit-u-s-in-sept-first-trip-to-bhutan-idUSKBN0EH1C320140606>.

<sup>496</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 167.

<sup>497</sup> Garver.

separates India's northeast region from the remainder of the country by only 17 miles as displayed by Figure 8.<sup>498</sup>

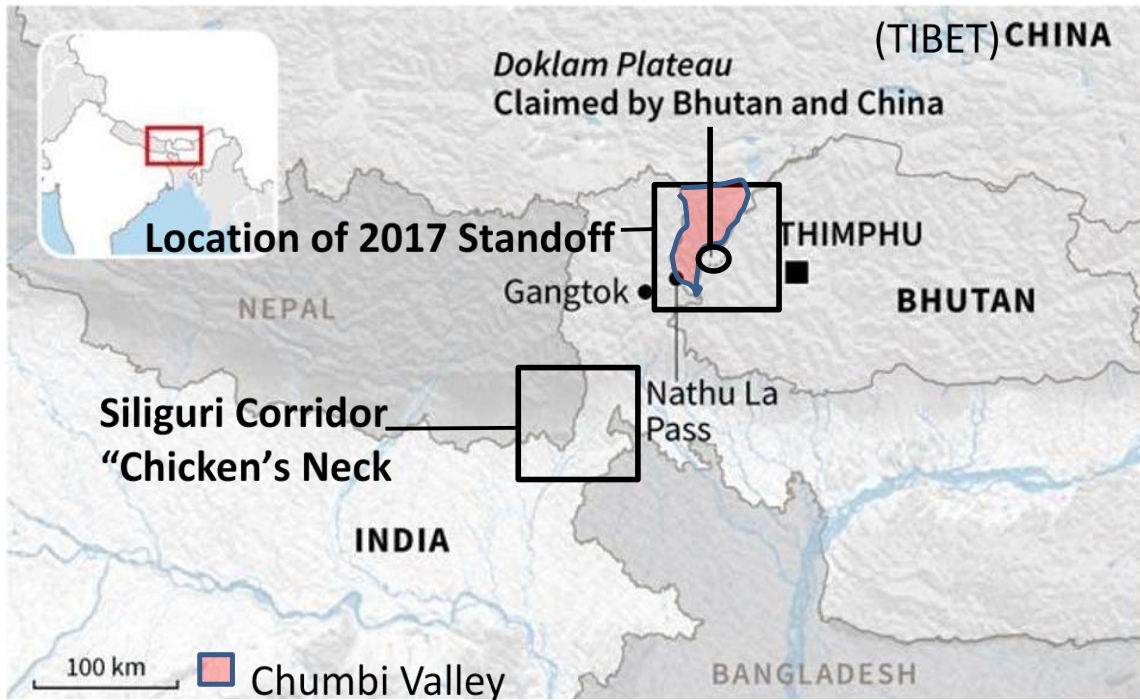


Figure 8. Location of the 2017 India-China Standoff in Bhutan.<sup>499</sup>

If the PLA were to militarily seize the Chicken's Neck, it would effectively cut off 45 million Indians<sup>500</sup> who live in the northeast region from the rest of the country.<sup>501</sup> Of the three areas that Bhutan and China dispute, the Doklam plateau yields the greatest strategic value for India due to its proximity to the Chicken's Neck and because of the

<sup>498</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "Is India Starting to Flex Its Military Muscles," *Foreign Policy*, October 17, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/17/is-india-starting-to-flex-its-military-muscles/>.

<sup>499</sup> Adapted from "China Issues 'Map' to Claim India Troops' 'Incursion' Near Sikkim Sector," *The Daily Observer*, July 3, 2017, <http://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=81873>.

<sup>500</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over Remote Mountain Pass," *New York Times*, July 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/doklam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html>.

<sup>501</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "Is India Starting to Flex Its Military Muscles."

military advantages the terrain yields.<sup>502</sup> If China was able to deny India the use of the Doklam Plateau, the PLA could move south through the Chumbi Valley toward the Chicken's Neck more quickly and with less exposure to India's artillery fires and flanking attacks.<sup>503</sup>

To meet some of the challenges in the northeast region, India initiated infrastructure development projects that extend into the region to facilitate troop reinforcements.<sup>504</sup> Additionally, India has prepared for conflict with China in the Himalayas by raising 4 mountain divisions specially trained for high altitude operations.<sup>505</sup> Furthermore, India conducts monthly joint patrols with the Royal Bhutan Army, which has small post at Jampheri Ridge.<sup>506</sup> India views Jampheri Ridge as key terrain due to the potential advantage it could yield to the PLA in the case of an attempt to seize the Chicken's Neck.<sup>507</sup> The joint Bhutan-India patrols are intended to provide early warning in the case of PLA activity so India can maneuver troops into the area accordingly.<sup>508</sup>

In 2017, China tested India when the PLA advanced on the Doklam Plateau into territory that Bhutan claims and India supports.<sup>509</sup> Bhutan claims that Batang La marks the tri-juncture between India-China-Bhutan.<sup>510</sup> China disputes Bhutan's claim and instead

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<sup>502</sup> Brian Benedictus, "Bhutan and the Great Power Tussle."

<sup>503</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 168.

<sup>504</sup> Mohan, *Samudra Mathan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo Asia Pacific* 25–26.

<sup>505</sup> Francine R. Frankel, "The Breakout of China-India Strategic Rivalry in Asia and the Indian Ocean," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 64, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2011): 5.

<sup>506</sup> Sushant Singh, "Motorable Track at the Centre of Tug-of-War with Beijing," *The Indian Express*, July 13, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/motorable-track-at-the-centre-of-tug-of-war-with-beijing/>.

<sup>507</sup> Ankit Panda, "What's Driving the India-China Standoff at Doklam," *The Diplomat*, July 18, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/whats-driving-the-india-china-standoff-at-doklam/>.

<sup>508</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, 169.

<sup>509</sup> Barkha Dutt, "Could a War Break Out Between India and China – Again?" *The Washington Post* (July 20, 2017), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/07/20/could-a-war-break-out-between-india-and-china-again/?utm\\_term=.ab6ad4f11c31](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/07/20/could-a-war-break-out-between-india-and-china-again/?utm_term=.ab6ad4f11c31).

<sup>510</sup> Ankit Panda, "The Political Geography of the India-China Crisis at Doklam," *The Diplomat* (July 13, 2017), <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/the-political-geography-of-the-india-china-crisis-at-doklam/>.

asserts that the Jampheri Ridge is the tri-juncture between the three countries.<sup>511</sup> During the first week of June, a platoon from the PLA crossed the disputed border at Batang La moving south to Dok La, or Doklam, which is in-between the two disputed tri-juncture points as seen in Figure 9.<sup>512</sup>

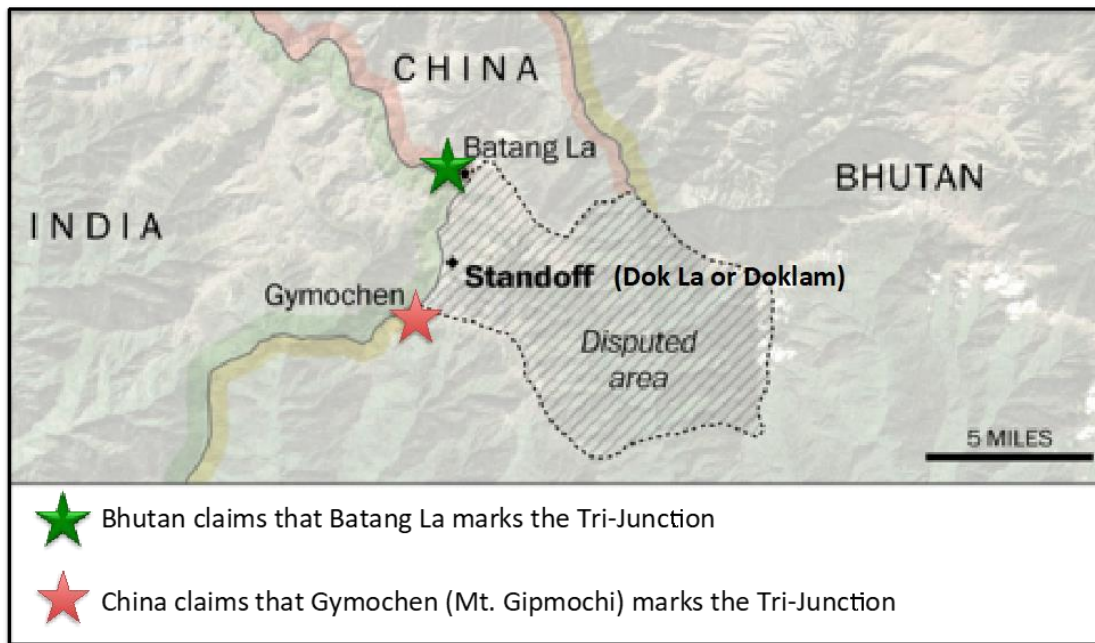


Figure 9. The Tri-Junctures<sup>513</sup>

The PLA platoon destroyed unoccupied structures in the Dok La area typically used by the Royal Bhutanese Army who routinely patrol the area.<sup>514</sup> On 16 June, a company-sized unit from the PLA, which included engineers enabled with heavy machinery,

<sup>511</sup>Sushant Singh, “Motorable Track at the Centre of Tug-of-War with Beijing,” *The Indian Express*, July 13, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/motorable-track-at-the-centre-of-tug-of-war-with-beijing/>.

<sup>512</sup>Ankit Panda, “The Political Geography of the India-China Crisis at Doklam.”

<sup>513</sup>Adapted from Simon Denyer and Annie Gowen, “India, China Agree to Pull Back Troops to Resolve Tense Border Dispute,” *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/india-withdraws-troops-from-disputed-himalayan-region-defusing-tension-with-china/2017/08/28/b92fddb6-8bc7-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.7807b97f145b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/india-withdraws-troops-from-disputed-himalayan-region-defusing-tension-with-china/2017/08/28/b92fddb6-8bc7-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19_story.html?utm_term=.7807b97f145b).

<sup>514</sup>Jonah Blank, “What Were China’s Objectives in the Doklam Dispute?” *Foreign Affairs*, September 7, 2017, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/09/what-were-chinas-objectives-in-the-doklam-dispute.html>.



attempted to extend a “motor-able” road across disputed territory toward the Jampheri Ridge as seen in Figure 10.<sup>515</sup>

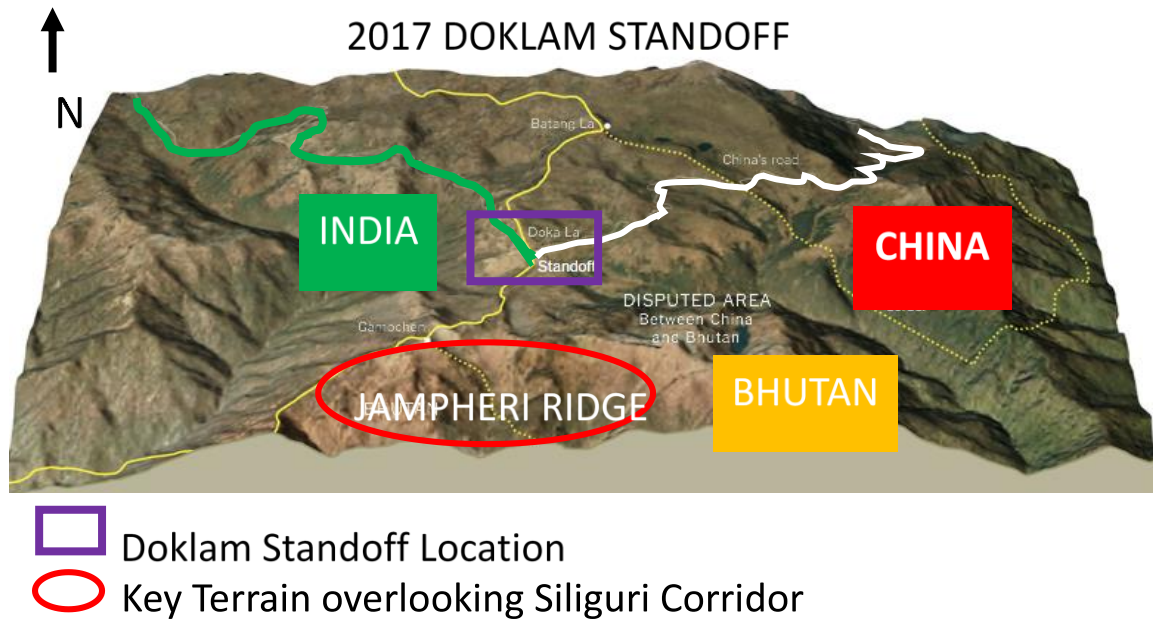


Figure 10. Key Terrain of the 2017 Doklam Standoff. <sup>516</sup>

A platoon from the Royal Bhutan Army confronted the PLA and requested that it cease its construction.<sup>517</sup> After the PLA refused to cease road construction and at the request of Bhutan,<sup>518</sup> a reinforced company, around 350 troops, from the Indian Army crossed into the disputed territory to confront the PLA and halt its road construction efforts.<sup>519</sup> After nearly a month of the standoff, China increased the challenge by deploying a brigade, between 5000 and 7000 troops, to the far western portion of the Tibetan Plateau

<sup>515</sup> Ankit Panda, “The Political Geography of the India-China Crisis at Doklam.”

<sup>516</sup> Adapted from Steven Lee Myers, “How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over Remote Mountain Pass,” *The New York Times* (July 26, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/doklam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html>.

<sup>517</sup> Ankit Panda, “The Political Geography of the India-China Crisis at Doklam.”

<sup>518</sup> Barkha Dutt, “Could a War Break Out Between India and China – Again?”

<sup>519</sup> Richard M. Rossow, “For the United States, India’s Moves at Doklam Signal Its Willingness to Act.”

for a live fire and maneuver exercise, which was aired on China Central Television.<sup>520</sup> Concurrent with the military exercise, China's foreign ministry demanded that India immediately withdrawal and warned India "not to push your luck and cling to any fantasies."<sup>521</sup> Additionally, China's state sponsored media promoted threatening messages throughout the two-month standoff.<sup>522</sup> In the *China Daily*, the editorial read that if "[China's] good manners do not work, in the end, it may be necessary to rethink our approach. Sometimes a head-on-blow may work better than a thousand pleas in waking up a dreamer."<sup>523</sup> Despite the threatening messages, India kept its troops in position for two months until both China and India agreed to return to the status quo.<sup>524</sup>

Although both sides agreed to deescalate, the border dispute remained unresolved and China's threats continued. China's road construction efforts toward the Jampheri Ridge halted; however, China refused to fully remove its forces from the disputed territory and has insisted on maintaining a presence in the area.<sup>525</sup> Wu Qian, a spokesperson from China's Ministry of External Affairs, stated that "we [China] remind India to learn the lessons from this incident"<sup>526</sup> and the "the world is not peaceful."<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>520</sup>Franz-Stefan Gady, "Amid China-India Border Standoff: China Holds Military Exercise in Tibet," *The Diplomat*, July 18, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/amid-china-india-border-standoff-china-holds-military-exercise-in-tibet/>.

<sup>521</sup> "China Demands India Pulls Back Troops In Border Dispute," *Al Jazeera*, August 4, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/china-demands-india-pulls-troops-border-dispute-170724065132611.html>.

<sup>522</sup>"India Stands to Face Retribution," *China Daily*, August 28, 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-08/28/content\\_31210054.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-08/28/content_31210054.htm).

<sup>523</sup> "China Warns India Over 'Military Build-Up' in Doklam," *Al Jazeera*, August 4, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/china-warns-india-military-buildup-border-170804041315590.html>.

<sup>524</sup> Simon Denyer and Annie Gowen, "India, China Agree to Pull Back Troops to Resolve Tense Border Dispute," *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/india-withdraws-troops-from-disputed-himalayan-region-defusing-tension-with-china/2017/08/28/b92fddb6-8bc7-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.7807b97f145b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/india-withdraws-troops-from-disputed-himalayan-region-defusing-tension-with-china/2017/08/28/b92fddb6-8bc7-11e7-a2b0-e68cbf0b1f19_story.html?utm_term=.7807b97f145b).

<sup>525</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "Is India Starting to Flex Its Military Muscles."

<sup>526</sup> Simon Denyer and Annie Gowen, "India, China Agree to Pull Back Troops to Resolve Tense Border Dispute."

<sup>527</sup>Sanjeev Miglani and Ben Blanchard, "India and China Agree to End Border Standoff," *Reuters*, August 27, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-china-idUSKCN1B80II>.



In response to China's pressure Bhutan, India demonstrated that it was willing to risk war to deter further Chinese expansion. Although the confrontation did not lead to a fight and only involved several hundred soldiers from each side, the significance of the balancing act was strategic as it sent a message to the international community that India was willing to stop China from coercively advancing into what India considers its sphere of influence.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

India has responded to China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and expansionist rise in the Indian Ocean Region by balancing. India has persistently engaged in internal balancing measures to include a robust increase in defense spending. Additionally, India has externally balance against China. India has applied its increased defense spending to a specific shift to address China's growing maritime threats. India's shift to protecting the maritime domain includes increasing maritime partnerships to balance against the People's Liberation Army Navy and to protect SLOCs. India has engaged other countries that share territorial disputes with China and who also appear committed to balance against China's rise. India, the United States, and Japan appear to have converged to form the core balancing coalition against China. India has sought out relations with middle powers who have territorial disputes with China, like Vietnam, that can assist in the balancing effort. Additionally, India has taken a competitive stance toward the Belt and Road Initiative, choosing to pursue initiatives that mitigate China's increased influence in the Indian Ocean Region. India has supported its balancing actions with strong diplomacy that challenges the authenticity of China's expansion in both the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean Region. India's commitment to balancing on its disputed borders are as resolute as they were 56 years ago when the two countries went to war. Moreover, India's unresolved border dispute remains a trigger for war that only increases with China's continual expansionist behavior. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that when faced with China's expansionist rise, India has remained committed to pursuing internal and external balancing strategies.



## VI. CONCLUSION

This thesis investigated whether India was likely to be a reliable security partner for the United States in its strategic efforts to balance against a rising China. For the last fifteen years, the United States has recognized India as a “natural partner”<sup>528</sup> and has made substantial investments in improving India’s military capabilities to address China’s rising power in the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>529</sup> Although the United States has made substantial investments toward modernizing and equipping India’s military, there are concerns in the United States that India’s strategic character is passive, or restrained, and that they are unlikely to play an active role in balancing against China.<sup>530</sup> This thesis showed in each of the cases where China presented India with a major security challenge, India has actively balanced against China. India’s balancing efforts are significant because it suggests that concerns that India is passive, and therefore not a reliable security partner for the United States, are unfounded. Rather, the evidence suggests that India is likely to participate actively in balancing China’s rise and preserving a democratically oriented free and open Indo-Pacific. The thesis concludes with synopsis of the case studies and policy recommendations for the United States.

### A. CASE STUDY SYNOPSIS

Examining four case studies, this thesis analyzed whether India decided to balance or bandwagon when China challenged India along its borders, threatened intervention during wars with Pakistan, presented nuclear challenges, and expanded geostrategic challenges into the Indian Ocean Region. In every case, India chose to balance against China irrespective of whether they were supported by the United States or other powers.

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<sup>528</sup> Victor Mallet, “US and India Strengthen ‘Natural’ Partnership,” *Financial Times* (January 25, 2015), <https://www.ft.com/content/d4df6e38-a456-11e4-8959-00144feab7de>.

<sup>529</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, “Is India Starting to Flex Its Military Muscles.”

<sup>530</sup> Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dsgupta, *Arming without Aiming* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 25–28. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/armingwithoutaimingrevised\\_chapter.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/armingwithoutaimingrevised_chapter.pdf)

The first major security challenge occurred when outmatched-India went to war with the more powerful-China over disputed borders in 1962. Despite promises of “peaceful coexistence,”<sup>531</sup> China’s forceful occupation of Tibet and coercive diplomacy regarding disputed borders presented India with a major challenge. In this case, India responded competitively. India granted asylum to the Dalai Lama and thousands of his followers, which sowed the seeds for future discord with China.<sup>532</sup> Although militarily weaker and unprepared, India internally balanced by adopting an aggressive “forward policy” to confront China along its borders.<sup>533</sup> Additionally, India demonstrated a capacity for external balancing when Nehru personally requested the support of the United States to combat China.<sup>534</sup> India utilized support from the United States to try and balance against China’s assertive behavior along the border. India’s failures during the 1962 Sino-Indian war lead India to adopt smarter and more robust defense strategies. More importantly, India came to recognize China, not Pakistan, as its primary strategic competitor.

The second major security challenge came when China tested India’s commitment to balancing by exploiting India’s conflicted relationship with Pakistan. Recognizing that the Indo-Pakistani divide over Kashmir was a strategically sensitive issue for India, China pursued several strategies to exploit India’s geopolitical vulnerabilities. China aggressively pursued increased relations with Pakistan, which included a bilateral agreement that gave China control of strategically sensitive terrain in Kashmir.<sup>535</sup> China increased its challenge to India by threatening to intervene on Pakistan’s behalf in the case of outright Indo-Pakistani conflict. As China increased its support to Pakistan, India again was faced with a significant security challenge: the risk of a two-front war. In this case, India continued to exhibit behaviors consistent with balancing against China – fighting two wars against Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, defying China’s threats of intervention while seeking security

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<sup>531</sup> Lu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: A Legal Study*, 54–56.

<sup>532</sup> John Garver, “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” 92

<sup>533</sup> Neville Maxwell, “Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, no. 14/15 (April 14–20, 2001), 1189–1192.

<sup>534</sup> “U.S.–India Relations: 1947–2015,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (1 April 2018), <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-india-relations>.

<sup>535</sup> Ganguly, *Conflict Unending*, 32–33.

guarantees from China's rivals. Despite failing to achieve international support, India still went to war. India maintained its commitment to balancing against China while simultaneously emerging as the dominant power in South Asia and a potential strategic rival for China.

India's third major challenge from China followed China's acquisition of nuclear weapons, which increased international prestige. Although China did not acquire nuclear weapons because of India, a nuclear-enabled China challenged India's abilities to pursue its interests diplomatically and in war. After China was internationally recognized as a nuclear weapons state, India responded by publicly condemning China and pursuing internal and external balancing strategies.<sup>536</sup> India internally pursued a "nuclear option" while externally seeking support from China's rivals.<sup>537</sup> The United States refused to support India's search for a nuclear deterrent and instead prioritized its relationship with Pakistan.<sup>538</sup> China increased its nuclear challenge by gaining increased international prestige despite proliferating nuclear technology to Pakistan.<sup>539</sup> Despite massive international pressure, India decided to test nuclear weapons in 1998 and subsequently alert the international community, especially the United States, that China needed to be balanced.<sup>540</sup> In this case, India's decision to balance against China came in the face of opposition from the United States. Nevertheless, India continued to balance and even notified the international community, via the *New York Times*, about China's rise; India's resolve to balance proved a turning point in U.S. strategic thinking.

India's fourth challenge from China, which is ongoing, is China's internationally assertive behavior and expansion into the Indian Ocean Region. In response, India again

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<sup>536</sup> Sam Pope Brewer, "India and Japan Denounce China: Tell Arms Unit Test is Peril to Man and Affront to U.N.," Special to the *New York Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, May 15, 1965, P2.

<sup>537</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, 13–59.

<sup>538</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing-dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation of Conflict?* 28.

<sup>539</sup> John W. Garver, "The Security Dilemma in Sino-Indian Relations, *India Review*," (Vol. 1, no. 4, 2007), 9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480208404640>.

<sup>540</sup> Vajpayee, "Nuclear Anxiety; Indian's Letter to Clinton On the Nuclear Testing," *New York Times*, 13 May 1998,

has chosen to balance. Internally, India is addressing shortfalls in its maritime capacity to match the challenge presented by increased People's Liberation Army Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean Region. Furthermore, India has been vocal in condemning China's Belt and Road Initiative. India is behaving competitively by seeking regional connectivity projects that challenge China's attempts to dominate. Externally, India has responded to China's expansion by developing increased relations with China's rivals, namely the United States and Japan. Additionally, India is challenging China in the South China Sea by partnering with other nations that have territorial disputes with China.

India's recent decision to challenge China's road expansion in Bhutan is important for two reasons. First, India demonstrated that it is willing to risk war to prevent China from expanding at the expense of smaller countries that lack the ability to defend themselves.<sup>541</sup> The United States, as well as others, failed to do the same when China initiated its land reclamation efforts in the South China Sea that defied international law. For anyone doubting India's resolve, the Doklam standoff should serve as evidence of India's determination. . Second, the standoff at Doklam highlights that India and China have over 2400 miles of unresolved border issues which could serve as a potential trigger for war.

These four cases represent major inflection points in the Sino-Indian relationship and should serve as relevant evidence that India is firmly committed to balancing against China's rise. Furthermore, India's historical record of actively balancing against China should challenge arguments suggesting that India is strategically restrained and unlikely to play an active role in balancing against China. The following section provides recommendations for U.S. foreign policy.

## **B. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The evidence presented by these case studies directly contradicts arguments characterizing India as passive, and instead demonstrates that India is likely to be a valuable partner for the United States in efforts to actively balance against China's growing power.

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<sup>541</sup> S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "Is India Starting to Flex Its Military Muscles."

This thesis provides recommendations for U.S.–policy along two general lines of effort. First, recognizing the long-term value of the partnership, the United States should maintain the current trajectory of U.S.–Indian relations and continue to pursue policies that enhance the partnership. Second, the United States should support and compliment India’s emerging partnerships with Japan and other regional powers. If successful, the U.S.–India partnership could help preserve a democratically oriented free and open Indo-Pacific.

The United States should continue to value its partnership with India as a unique long-term investment that needs to be protected from policies that run counter to the United States’ long-term strategic objectives. As shown in the case studies, India has historically looked to the United States for assistance in balancing against China. However, also demonstrated in the case studies, the United States has been inconsistent in supporting India in its balancing efforts. For the U.S.–India partnership to be successful in maintaining a democratically oriented free and open Indo-Pacific, United States policy must prioritize the relationship and sustain long-term commitment.

The first line of effort aims to maintain and enhance the U.S.–India partnership. In the near term, the United States should continue to pursue the three foundational agreements that facilitate military interoperability and further solidify India as a “Major Defense Partner of the United States.”<sup>542</sup> In August of 2016, India and the United States signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA); however, as of the writing of this thesis, the two countries have failed to finalize the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), which allow the two countries to utilize more sophisticated technology, share information, and conduct more advanced defense

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<sup>542</sup> Mark Rosen and Douglas Jackson, *The U.S.–India Defense Relationship: Putting the Foundational Agreements in Perspective*, no. N00014-16-D-5003 (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 2017), 2. [https://www.cna.org/cna\\_files/pdf/DRM-2016-U-013926-Final2.pdf](https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/DRM-2016-U-013926-Final2.pdf).

cooperation.<sup>543</sup> The United States should “creatively” tailor the agreements to satisfy India’s concerns and act with a sense of urgency to finalize the agreements.<sup>544</sup>

In addition to finalizing the foundational agreements, the United States should ensure that India has the requisite military equipment to balance against China in the Indian Ocean region. In this case, the United States in conjunction with India will be required to maintain sea control in the Indian Ocean Region to ensure protection of the SLOCs.<sup>545</sup> U.S.–policy should encourage the partnership to focus on developing the requisite capabilities that enable sea control, which include anti-submarine warfare and maritime-domain awareness.<sup>546</sup> The 2012 U.S. Defense Trade and Technology Initiative and the India Rapid Response Cell should be utilized to expedite India’s acquisition of critical assets that enable sea control.<sup>547</sup> For example, India’s acquisition of assets like General Atomics “Guardian” drone will enable India to conduct maritime reconnaissance in the Indian Ocean Region and track PLAN activity, which contributes to maritime-domain awareness.<sup>548</sup> U.S.–policy should continue to promote and aggressively pursue these types of transfers.

Concurrent to finalizing the foundation of the partnership and increasing technology transfers, the United States should increase funding to expand efforts to enhance the frequency and quality of military exercises with India. The United States

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<sup>543</sup> Rosen, 1–5.

<sup>544</sup> “US Needs to be Creative on Insisting Foundational Agreements with India,” *The Tribune*, February 15, 2018, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/-us-needs-to-be-creative-on-insisting-foundational-agreements-with-india/544287.html>. See also, S. Paul Kapur and Samir Saran, “How India and The U.S. Can Lead in the Indo-Pacific,” *Observer Research Foundation*, August 18, 2017, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/how-india-us-can-lead-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>545</sup> S. Paul Kapur and William C. McQuilkin, “Preparing for the Future Indian Ocean Security Environment,” *Observer Research Foundation*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/preparing-for-the-future-indian-ocean-security-environment-challenges-and-opportunities-for-the-indian-navy/>.

<sup>546</sup> Kapur and McQuilkin.

<sup>547</sup> Kathleen H. Hicks, “U.S.–India Security Cooperation: Progress and Promise for the Next Administration,” 33–36.

<sup>548</sup> Nyshka Chandran, “New Delhi Wants to Buy U.S. Drones to Monitor China in the Indian Ocean,” *CNBC*, September 27, 2017. <https://www.cnb.com/2017/09/27/india-news-modi-wants-naval-drones-to-watch-china-in-indian-ocean.html>



should consult the U.S.–India Defense Policy Group to propose new exercises that expand the range of scenarios that the partnership may be confronted with in the near and long term.<sup>549</sup> For example, the exercises should address scenarios that ranging from humanitarian assistance to conventional conflict that spans the entirety of the Indo-Pacific region. With increased frequency of exercises, the U.S.–India military partnership will develop the necessary capabilities to more effectively operate in crisis.

The second line of effort focuses on India’s relationships with other countries interested in balancing against China’s rising power, especially Japan. In addition to partnering with the United States, India’s external balancing efforts include increased relations with other regional powers, which creates an opportunity for U.S. policy to support and compliment India in its efforts. India and Japan have gravitated to each other due to the amount of stake they have in balancing against China, especially in the maritime domain. The United States should assess the Japan-Indian relationship to ensure U.S.–policies regarding each country are supportive and complimentary. The U.S.–India partnership can leverage Japanese maritime assets to expand its capability to conduct sea control across the entirety of the Indo-Pacific.

Similarly, the United States should look for ways to compliment India’s security relations with other countries interested in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. For example, India has increased relations with Vietnam in policy efforts to “act east.”<sup>550</sup> India and Vietnam have both have demonstrated a willingness to confront China’s expansion into disputed territories and both countries have recently been deepening defense their cooperation.<sup>551</sup> Simultaneously, the United States is increasing relations and defense cooperation with Vietnam. For example, in 2016, the United States lifted its arms embargo on Vietnam indicating a desire to initiate arms transfers.<sup>552</sup> The United States should

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<sup>549</sup> Kathleen H. Hicks, “U.S.–India Security Cooperation: Progress and Promise for the Next Administration,” 33–36.

<sup>550</sup> Srinu Sitaraman, “Act East: The India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership,” China Policy Institute: Analysis, March 9, 2017, <https://cpianalysis.org/2017/03/09/act-east-the-india-vietnam-comprehensive-strategic-partnership/>.

<sup>551</sup> Sitaraman.

<sup>552</sup> Sitaraman.

attempt to compliment and support India's efforts to assist other countries in balance against China's rise.

This thesis showed that every time India has faced a significant challenge from China, India has chosen to balance. Therefore, India, as an emerging power, will likely play an increasingly important role in preserving a democratically oriented free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States should expect India to continue to balance against China's rise and should continue to invest in the U.S.–India partnership accordingly.

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